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Orientalismos: exilio, alteridad y cultura árabe en la obra de Paul Bowles

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Directora

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[ORIENTALISMS: EXILE, ALTERITY AND ARABIC CULTURE IN THE WRITINGS OF PAUL BOWLES]

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NOTA PRELIMINAR

El título de la presente tesis, *Orientalismos: exilio, alteridad y cultura árabe en la obra de Paul Bowles*, no refleja con precisión el contenido de la misma, pues fue un título escogido en las fases iniciales de la investigación y actualmente no abarca todos los aspectos que conforman este trabajo. De haber sido posible, hubiera preferido que esta investigación llevara por título *Del viaje al exilio: orientalismo y cosmopolitismo en la obra de Paul Bowles* [*From Travel to Exile: Orientalism and Cosmopolitanism in the Writings of Paul Bowles*]. Dado que un contratiempo administrativo me ha impedido modificarlo a tiempo, espero que sepan disculparme y tengan en cuenta esta segunda opción.

A man who has been through bitter experiences and traveled far enjoys even his sufferings after a time

Homer, *The Odyssey*

Traveling— it leaves you speechless, then turns you into a storyteller

Ibn Battuta, *Travels*

1. INTRODUCTION

Paul Frederick Bowles (1910-1999) was born in Jamaica, a middle-class neighborhood in the New York City borough of Queens. He had a conventional upbringing, marked by a mutual dislike for his father, a dentist, and a conscious isolation. He coped with an uncomfortable childhood by reading and writing his own stories, which he started to compose when he was only three years old. At seven he began composing poems and lyrics for music, discovering his second passion in the same self-taught manner he had explored reading and writing. He soon started to learn piano and composition at home, and Edgar Alan Poe became his favorite author. Before attending the University of Virginia, Bowles had already submitted two poems product of automatic writing to the French literary magazine *transition*, whose issues he coveted above anything else. To his immense delight, they were published in the Winter issue of 1927 and in the Spring issue of 1928. Reading the magazine gave him the impression that he was in Paris, a destination that became his obsession: "Paris was the center of all existence. I could feel its glow when I faced eastward as a Moslem feels the light from Mecca, and I knew that some day I should go there and stand on the sacred spots" (*Without Stopping* 69-70).

After two semesters at university, he felt the compulsion to do something irrevocable. He would toss a coin: heads would mean going to Paris, tails taking a bottle of pills and leaving no note. And heads it was. He was nineteen and he had already laid the foundations for a precocious artistic career and determined his life choices, marked by a desire to get away from the U.S. as far as possible.

The first trip to Paris would be the seed for many more trips to come. More than a compulsion, they became his *raison d'être.* He spent most of his twenties and thirties

traveling, demonstrating excellent skills to learn the local languages along the way: France, Germany, North Africa, Spain, Mexico, the Caribbean, Central America… The compulsion to travel remained after meeting and marrying the writer Jane Auer Bowles (1917-1973) in 1938. They would settle in Tangier in 1947, where they would live intermittently for the rest of their lives.

Although Bowles devoted most of his energy in his twenties and thirties to become a professional composer, his interest in writing never disappeared completely. It did not become his main activity until he was living abroad. Although he produced travel literature, he cultivated mainly fiction. And in most of his fiction, the background was the travel, the encounter with the Other, the Other's culture. Most of his writings would present North Africa and Morocco as a setting. In this dissertation, I will focus on these writings, whether fiction or non-fiction.

Bowles's first novel *The Sheltering Sky* (1949) popularized his image as an expatriate figure fascinated with the exotic Orient. Although initially the sales were not remarkable, this and his two other "Moroccan" novels –*Let It Come Down* (1952) and *The Spider's House* (1955)— were critically acclaimed and considerably known in the 1960s. When Bernardo Bertolucci adapted *The Sheltering Sky* to the cinema in 1990, his figure received a renovated interest. Readers and critics were fascinated by his writings but also by his life choices. Why did he become an expatriate voluntarily? Why did he remain living in Tangier after 1956, when it was no longer an international zone where foreigners could enjoy a privileged position? What was his position towards the colonial situation of Morocco? Why did his writings become increasingly Moroccan? Why he devoted his mature years translating and adapting the works of Moroccan writers and storytellers?

To a certain extent, Bowles's critics have tried to answer these questions, but their efforts are frequently focused on the novels and some of the short stories. Travel writings,

translations, and late works such as *Points in Time* (1982), have not received so much attention. The main critical approaches used to study his works have been existentialism, psychoanalysis and postcolonialism. Western critics have frequently restricted their area of study to emphasize his stay in the international milieu, and his connections with different members of the avant-garde that joined him in Tangier, although Bowles did not align with any particular literary movement. Besides, they tend to overlook the influence of Moroccan traditional culture in his works.

Moroccan scholars, for their part, have not always praised this influence or his collaborations with Moroccan authors. They have frequently interpreted his work under the aegis of Orientalism. Bowles was perceived as an exploiter who took advantage personally and literarily of Moroccans. Nowadays, when the decolonization process seems more distant, these perceptions are starting to change.

I initially intended to develop a wider postcolonial reading of Bowles's works to study in depth all his Moroccan texts, with special attention to his interest for local culture and language. But I soon realized it was naïve to think that Bowles's position towards Morocco and its inhabitants would remain inalterable throughout the years. If Bowles was an Orientalist writer, did he remain the same Orientalist writer during his whole career? I suspected that his was a very different Orient than I used to read about. I could see elements of the Orientalist tradition that Edward Said dissected to well in his milestone *Orientalism* (1978). And yet, I could not see Bowles, who chose to live in Morocco for most of his life, who translated the works of several illiterate storytellers, who dedicated many of his own stories to native characters, whose Western characters frequently suffered more than the portrayed Orientals, as a full Orientalist writer. I tried to analyze his work from a purely Orientalist perspective but I saw the result was inconclusive, that it did not grasped and could not explain the multiple aspects and layers in Bowles's works. That is

why I decided to compile the texts written before him by other English-speaking authors, so I could see in which aspects Bowles's writings departed from the Orientalist tradition in Morocco or in which ways they partook in the same tropes and stereotypes set by this discourse. The conclusion, again, was unsatisfactory. First of all, I could see that these texts, travel narratives mostly, were quite different from one another, even in their use of Orientalist elements. Secondly, I saw that some of Bowles's texts harbored the same aesthetic, the same tone and the same Orientalist features as some of the travel narratives exhibited. And yet, not all of Bowles's works could be analyzed in such a light. I have dedicated the first section of this dissertation to support the idea that Bowles was more than a travel writer and an Orientalist, even though he was partly a travel writer and an Orientalist. Why? To begin with, he was not a traveling writer his entire career; he decided to settle in Morocco and continue to work there as an expatriate author. Secondly, he was the first English-speaking author who decided to use North Africa as a setting for his fiction and to include native characters. Furthermore, he knew the language and exhibited a great deal of knowledge of local customs and traditions that exceeded the background of former travelers. As an expert, he was constantly interviewed by Western media about his authoritative opinion on such matters.

That is why I started to consider Bowles as a kind of cultural anthropologist, who could be able to produce a catalogue of North African and, mainly Moroccan, rituals and beliefs. The second section of this dissertation is the development of this initial hypothesis. In it, I mention the work of many anthropologists in Morocco and I analyze the ethnographic elements in Bowles's fiction and Bowles's approach to Moroccan culture. This kind of approach is specially revealing in connection to the representations of the Other. However, I continued to find that anthropology was not a suitable framework to comprise Bowles's ideas and some of his works. It was difficult and a bit futile to

encompass his translations and his late works within a purely anthropological approach. Besides, Bowles's characters seldom managed to overcome alterity. Both Orientalism and anthropology were a dead end and failed to unify Bowles's career. And it saddened me to see how pessimistic these readings could be, how reductive they were compared to the power of Bowles's imagination. This is how I came to start reading about cosmopolitanism. I found that Bowles's work suited many of the cosmopolitan principles and that cosmopolitanism could provide another angle, an approach that fits and completes a threefold perspective of the writings of Paul Bowles. Far from cultivating a position of cultural relativism, Bowles developed an ethics of expatriation, a cosmopolitan subjectivity that mostly surfaced in his last works. The cosmopolitan approach offers a way of overcoming the reductionism of postcolonial and Orientalist readings, opening Bowles's works to new sensitivities and approaches.

2. THE AUTHOR AS TRAVELER

2.1. Travel writing and Orientalism

2.1.1. Definition(s) of travel writing

If travel can be basically described as the move from one place to another, then travel writing can be loosely defined as the literary product derived from a journey or a stay in a foreign territory, that is: the recollection of impressions left by an unfamiliar place. In this sense, the recorded journey is going to be based on the confrontation of the self with alterity. As Carl Thompson has established, one possible definition of travel writing is the product of "the negotiation between self and other that is brought about by movement in space" (Thompson 9). As a consequence, travel writing has a double angle of view: it is a report of an unfamiliar place and/or people and, as Thompson has pointed out, it is revelatory in different degree on the traveler who produces the report and, by extension, shows the writer's mindset and his/her culture to a certain extent (10). In any case, this definition is extremely open: is a geographical treaty a piece of travel literature? What about a novel set in a foreign country? And the letters sent by a traveler?

The definition varies depending on the author's or the critic's point of view. Beginning with the most restrictive definition, in his canonic *Abroad: British Literary Travelling Between the Wars* (1980), Paul Fussell narrows the category of travel writing to the subgenre of the travelogue, that is, a retrospective prose narrative written in the fist person, "a sub-species of memoir in which the autobiographical narrative arises from the speaker's encounter with distant or unfamiliar data, and in which the narrative […] claims literal validity to constant reference to actuality" (203). For Fussell, the travel book can be understood as a form of "displaced quest romance" (209), because the quest elements are

displaced from the myth realm into the real world. He adds that these "displaced romances" are often associated to an elegiac, pastoral element.

On the other hand, Jan Borm offers a more inclusive definition by distinguishing travel books and travel writing: his definition of travel book matches with Fussell's, that is, a first-person, non-fictional account of a travel. But he gives a wider sphere to travel writing, declaring it "a collective term for a variety of texts both fictional and non-fictional whose main theme is travel" (13). Moreover, Borm concludes that in spite of its looseness, the term can be used as "a useful heading under which to consider and to compare the multiple crossings from one form of writing into another and, given the case, from one genre into another" (Borm 26)[1].

Similarly, Patrick Holland and Graham Huggan, referring to travel writing in the late twentieth century, define travel literature as a miscellanea that borrows from history, geography, anthropology and social science, generating a "hybrid genre that straddles categories and disciplines" (8-9).[2]

It seems that some travel writers tend to share these inclusive definitions. As the British author Jonathan Raban has pointed out, travel writing can be seen as a tag for close or overlapping genres: "travel writing is a notoriously raffish open house where different genres are likely to end up in the same bed. It accommodates the private diary, the essay, the short story, the prose poem, the rough note and polished table all with indiscriminate hospitality" (Raban 253-254).

[1] Borm, Jan, "Defining Travel: On the Travel Book, Travel Writing and Terminology." *Perspectives on Travel Writing*. Eds. Glenn Hooper and Tim Youngs. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004. 13-26.
[2] Holland, Patrick, and Graham Huggan. *Tourists with Typewriters: Critical Reflections on Contemporary Travel Writing.* Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1998. Print.

On the other hand, Paul Theroux, one of the most renowned exponents of contemporary travel writing, considers it a kind of supra-genre containing other genres within itself: "travel writing […] moves from journalism to fiction, arriving promptly […] at autobiography. From there any further travel makes a beeline to confession, the embarrassed monologue in a deserted bazaar. The anonymous hotel room in a strange city […] drives one into the confessional mode" (Theroux 299).

Regardless the definitions, the most controversial side of travel writings is the ideology that lies behind them. Mary Louise Pratt, in her seminal work *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (1992, 2007), argued that travel writing is inherently associated to the practices of colonization and imperialism. Her book is a study in depth of the characteristics of the genre from 1750 to the present day as well as a critique of its underlying ideology. For Pratt, "travel writing made imperial expansion meaningful and desirable to the citizens of the imperial countries" (Pratt 3). Pratt argues that travel books written initially by Europeans about other parts of the world created the imperial order for Europeans "at home" and offered them a place in it, transforming them into the "domestic subjects" of empire. In short, travel and exploration writing produced the rest of the world for European readerships. Over time, after the decolonization process, the Westerners directed their eyes to the Third World countries, maintaining and transforming some of the characteristics of the imperial travel writing and exploration writing. In this dissertation, I am going to adhere to the codes explored by Mary Louise Pratt in order to analyze the travel writing tradition in Morocco (1810-1932) as well as in Bowles's writings.

2.1.2. Does travel writing about the Orient become Orientalist literature?

Besides *Imperial Eyes*, the main reference in this section of the dissertation will be Edward W. Said's *Orientalism* (1978, 1995, 2003), usually considered the inaugural text

for postcolonial studies. As Peter Hulme and Tim Youngs have argued, "*Orientalism* was the first work of contemporary criticism to take travel writing as a major part of its corpus, seeing it as a body of work which offered particular insight into the operation of colonial discourses" (Hulme and Youngs 8). Even though Mary Louise Pratt does not quote Said in *Imperial Eyes*, their point of departure and intentions are similar: to demonstrate that travel texts have constructed the idea of the Other on the Western readership and to denounce this colonial enterprise. In his foundational text, Said categorically stated: "anyone who teaches, writes about, or researches the Orient —and this applies whether the person is an anthropologist, sociologist, historian, or philologist— either in its specific or general aspects, is an Orientalist" (*Orientalism* 2). In this sense, every piece of travel writing about the Orient is going to belong to the Orientalist tradition, as they all participate of the same stereotypes about the Orient. For Said, travel books are used to describe how a country is like or simply how it is, how are the places, people and the traveler's experiences to such an extent that the book "acquires a greater authority, and use, even than the actuality it describes" (*Orientalism* 93). Besides, explains Said, travel books provide "instructions" for the readers on how to deal with the topics (or subjects) described. The binary opposition between Occident and Orient was in fact a line of "imaginative geography." And so, Orient and Occident are artificial artifacts produced by human beings. For the Western mind, the Arabs, the Islam and the Orient only existed as "communities of interpretation" and each designation implied different interests, claims, projects, ambitions, and rhetoric that were "not only in violent disagreement, but also in situation of open warfare" with the West ("Orientalism Reconsidered" 201).[3]

Orientalism functions as a set of representational stereotypes about the Other: the Orientals are frequently deemed sensual and cruel, their governments corrupt and despotic,

[3] Said, Edward, *Reflections on Exile and other Literary and Cultural Essays*. London: Granta Books, 2000. 198-215.

their cities colorful and exotic. These sets of characteristics created a regularizing atlas of knowledge and imagery. For Said, Orientalism is a discourse, as described by Michel Foucault in *The Archaeology of Knowledge* and in *Discipline and Punish,* a tradition that not only creates knowledge, but also reality[4].

In this dissertation we will see how travel writing in Morocco constructed a "community of interpretation" of the country and its people. Morocco can be understood as an "imagined community," following Benedict Anderson's notion, that has been constructed from the outside, by travel writers and scholars, colonial agents and colons, foreign residents and tourists, as well as from the inside, when the decolonization process began, by the Moroccan nationalists themselves. Paul Bowles is going to occupy a prominent position in this representation, as an Orientalist, because he wrote about Morocco, and as a critic of the nationalist movement, for its attempts to destroy the primitive traces that made the country so appealing for foreigners.

2.2. Orientalism in the Anglo-American travel writing tradition in Morocco (18th C-early 20th C)[5]

According to Edward Said, modern Orientalism began in the last quarter of the 18th century with the Napoleonic invasion of Egypt (1798), and the difference between periods relies in the fact that the range of representations increased enormously in the later period (*Orientalism* 22). Representations of Morocco written in English language prior to the beginning of the nineteenth century are scarce, whereas there is a great concentration of works published at the turn of the nineteenth century, prior to the beginning of the colonial period (1912-1958).

Said explains that both knowledge and power are extremely intertwined in the praxis of Orientalism.[6] To know a civilization, that is, to have observed, studied and

[4] See *Orientalism*, 3, 23, 94, 130.
[5] For a detailed analysis of some noteworthy works of this period, see the Appendix, pages 225-308.

recorded its customs, languages, peoples, and political systems, entitles the Westerner writer—regardless if he/she is a scholar, a politician, a sociologist or an ethnographer—to apprehend that civilization and to finally exert some form of power or another on it. Being such the case, the reason why most of the traveling accounts are brought together at the turn of the century becomes evident: it was the period in which Morocco was a field for colonial experimentation. And by promoting "backward" countries and cultures, the metropolis had the possibility to reassert its knowledge and power.

To understand better such dialectics, I have divided the Orientalist tradition in Morocco in three stages; I will call the first one the age of Orientalist confidence, comprising most of the nineteenth century. The second is a stage of Orientalist sentimentalism, in which the texts published before the establishment of the French and Spanish protectorates (1912) are included. The third is a stage of Orientalist uncertainty and it covers most of the colonial period. In the first period the texts tend to be written from a hegemonic position. They tend to repeat the same commonplaces even if they were written by authors with very different backgrounds —explorers, doctors, residents, tourists, and intellectuals—.[7] Usually, the Other is almost invisible in such texts. Although some of the stereotypes still persist, during the stage of Orientalist sentimentalism the tone differs. The writers are now "experts" who generally try to find a way of maintaining a relationship with the Other while at the same time recording what they believe are the last years of authentic "Moroccanness." The third stage is the least homogeneous of them all, as it comprises texts advocating for the French protectorate and texts that start to challenge the dialectics of power and knowledge proper to the Orientalist discourse. Besides, up to the appearance of Paul Bowles in the Moroccan scene, all the texts on Morocco are travel

[6] See *Orientalism,* 32-37.
[7] Said explains that with the blooming of Orientalism in the 19th century, the Orientalist was "either a scholar […] or a gifted enthusiast, […] or both" (*Orientalism* 51).

books, and they must be studied accordingly. Inasmuch as Orientalism in Morocco undergoes a series of transformations, travel writing also changes while maintaining a set of similar characteristics at the same time.

2.3. Paul Bowles as a traveler: the quest for exoticism

Irish writer Colm Tóibín declared that "long before the sin of Orientalism was discovered, Paul Bowles had frequently been guilty of it, in word, in thought and in deed" (Tóibín 30)[8]. His fascination with the Orient would be a constant throughout his career.

2.3.1. Paul Bowles travels in and out North Africa

It is indisputable that Paul Bowles had a tendency to be always on the move. Not in vain, he entitled his autobiography *Without Stopping* (1974). Bowles spent most of his twenties and thirties traveling: France, Germany, Spain, Algeria, Morocco, Mexico, Sri Lanka or India were some of the destinations he chose. In this dissertation we are going to focus on Bowles's writings set in North Africa, mostly in Morocco, where Bowles would spend the majority of his life. First of all, I am going to draw a chronological review of his travels, while discussing the impact of these journeys in the author at the same time. We cannot forget that for Bowles, travel comes before writing, as he started to write after more than a decade of frequent traveling, but those experiences had a tremendous impact on his personality, and we will see throughout his biography, letters, and interviews.

In the spring of 1931, Paul Bowles traveled to Morocco for the first time. He was 21-years-old and his trip took place after a period of traveling from New York to Europe, where he spent time in Berlin and France. In Paris he frequented Jean Cocteau, André Gide, Ezra Pound, and Gertrude Stein, among others. It was the latter who was responsible for directing Bowles to Tangier. By then, Bowles was studying music with Aaron Copland

[8] Tóibín, Colm. "Avoid the Orient." Review of *Paul Bowles: A Life*, by Virginia Spencer Carr. *London Review of Books* 29 no. 1 (2007): 30-34, http://www.lrb.co.uk/v29/n01/colm-toibin/avoid-the-orient.

and he had been writing poetry following the surrealist method of automatic writing. Stein pronounced his poetry not poetry at all, "it's all false" (*Without Stopping* 122), she said, and advised him to stick to composing. She also exhorted him to go to Tangier. "She wanted to see […] what would happen when I hit here," he would later explain (*Conversations* 10). He was diagnosed with typhoid and returned to Paris a few months later, but the return journey to North Africa soon followed. By the end of 1932 he traveled through the Algerian Sahara and Tunisia, spending six months before leaving for New York due to lack of money. The experience of this trip would lay the foundations of his first novel, *The Sheltering Sky* (1949). In 1934 he returned to Morocco to work for a non-profit organization in Fez but a few months later went back to New York, where he lived intermittently, besides spending long stays in Mexico and traveling through Central America.

In 1947 he began dreaming with Tangier. He had recently started publishing his first short stories on magazines and had signed a contract with Doubleday and received an advance on a novel. With the money in hand he sailed again for Morocco. On July 1 he reached the Moroccan coast by boat, to be followed soon after by Jane Auer Bowles, whom he had married in 1938. "Then we landed, and Morocco took over" (*Without Stopping* 276), he wrote in his biography. In fact, Tangier would become their permanent residence for the rest of their lives, even though they would continue spending time abroad (Southeast Asia, mostly, where Bowles bought and sold an island) and short stays in the United States. After a mental collapse and a series of strokes, Jane died in a hospital in Málaga in 1973. Paul Bowles remained in Tangier until his own death, in 1999.

Throughout sixty-eight years, Morocco and North Africa were present in some way or another in the life of Paul Bowles: traveler first, then resident, and finally permanent expatriate. The geography, the mentality and the stereotypes of this region would permeate

his fiction and non-fiction. Throughout this whole section, I will focus on his first writings that include a Moroccan or North African background in order to study Bowles's role and influence as a travel writer or, at least, as a *traveling* writer. I will try to analyze his fiction (*The Sheltering Sky*, short stories) and his non-fiction (travel writing articles), comparing it to the dissimilar travel writing tradition in English language in order to explore the influences, connections and departures from the genre. I will also try to elucidate whether we can consider Bowles a travel writer and why. Then I will explore his influence and repercussions on later traveling accounts, the connection between travel writing and Orientalism, and the subsequent association with anthropology, cosmopolitanism and exile.

2.3.2. How the genre travel writing applies to Bowles fiction and non-fiction

In *Abroad* (1982), Paul Fussell applied the notion of pastoral displaced romance to the beautiful report of the visit to a poor country made by a (comparatively) rich traveler. The affordable cost of living in Morocco was one of the reasons why Bowles and other writers settled in Morocco. Besides, the pastoral tendency often goes hand in hand with the elegiac tone, specially in the interwar years, implying a "rejection of industrialism and everything implied by the concept 'modern northern Europe', it is a celebration of a Golden Age […] One travels to experience the past, and travel is thus an adventure in time as well as distance" (Fussell 209). While the modernist writers' Golden Age was situated in the mid 19th century, we will see that for Bowles, as well as for other travel writers, this Golden Age would be an undefined preindustrial age, sometimes even a lost childhood. For Bowles the Fez of the 1950s resemble the medieval European cities[9] and thus, Moroccans were representatives of the "Natural Man" or "Basic Humanity," as they had not evolved in

[9] See "Fez," article originally published in the magazine *Holiday* in July 1950, included in *Travels: Collected Writings 1950-1993*, 39-40.

the same was as Westerners had.[10] As we will see, there is a constant interest in Bowles's fiction and non-fiction with recording the last vestiges of a vanishing way of life, a way of life less spoiled than the life back home, an intention that matches Fussell's category of elegiac displaced romance.

In any case, if we take Fussell's definition literally, we could hardly consider Bowles a writer of travel books, even though we could consider him a writer of travel articles, of which he wrote almost forty for different American and British magazines. But if we opt for a more open definition of the genre, such as Borm's thematic definition of travel writing, and we take an overall view of his works —short stories, novels, autobiographical accounts, non-fiction essays, letters and translations— we will see a common interest in travel, in escapism, in living in foreign lands, in the encounter with the Other, in the quest of self-discovery. In the case of fiction, even though the autobiographic element is almost absent, the narration departs from locating a Westerner in a foreign environment. In an interview in 1981, Bowles was asked if he agreed with the critics that saw a central theme in his writings, "that of the alienation of civilized man when he comes in contact with a primitive society and its natural man"[11], to which he replied: "It's a theory that makes the body of writing more coherent, perhaps, when you put it all together" (*Conversations* 90). The travel and the encounter with the Other are the key themes inherent to this definition. With the exception of the surrealist poetry, Bowles writings are rooted in reality and could not have been written without his previous experience in Morocco and other countries. Therefore, we can consider his fiction is a product of displacement.

[10] See the interview with Jeffrey Bailey included in *Conversations with Paul Bowles*, 130.
[11] See Wayne Pounds, *Paul Bowles: The Inner Geography,* 20; Allen Hibbard, *Paul Bowles: A Study of the Short Fiction*, 145.

From a different angle, if Orientalism and travel writing by extension have an inherent discourse, as Said determined, and if Bowles's fiction and non-fiction works drink from the source of his experience in foreign soil, then we are bound to find traces of such discourse in those writings. If we cannot analyze them as travel books *per se*, then we can analyze those features of the travel writing tradition that appear in them as well as their influence.

Besides, we have to consider that also fictional accounts can have an important impact on our perceptions of other places and peoples. This is the case of Bowles's novels, most of all *The Sheltering Sky*, that popularized the image of North Africa and the Sahara in the United States much more than his travel articles.[12]

2.3.3. The role of the traveler in Paul Bowles writings: the invisible spectator

Paul Bowles declared in an interview that living outside his own culture was "a real compulsion" and that, even as a small child, he was "always eager to get away" (*Conversations* 116). This compulsion was a leap in the dark, but also an attempt to move further away from his parents and his suburban childhood in New York. In the early 1930s, his letters showed an evident anguish for the lack of economic resources and his fear of having to return to New York.[13] Indeed, young Bowles felt a necessity for changing places, as he would admit in his autobiography: "Had I believed that my constantly changing life, which I considered the most pleasant of all possible lives (save perhaps the same one on a

[12] *The Sheltering Sky* can be considered the first novel written in English whose main setting is North Africa, with the exception of Mabel Collins' *Ida, an Adventure in Morocco* (1890). In Collins' case, the author did not visit Morocco in order to collect her material. The traveler Budgett Meakin remarked: "No wonder people have strange ideas about Morocco if they read such stuff" (*Moorish Empire* 301). The first Moroccan novel written in French was *Mosaïques Ternies* by the writer Abdelkader Chatt of Tangier, published in France in 1930 under the pseudonym Benazous of Chatt. Most bibliographies of Moroccan literature present Abdelmajīd ben Jalloun's 1957 novel *Fī al-Ṭufūla* ["In My Childhood"] as the first Moroccan novel in Arabic. For more information, see Ian Campbell, *Labyrinths, Intellectuals and the Revolution: The Arabic-Language Moroccan Novel, 1957-72*, 39. For an approach to Bowles's influence in the American scene, see Brian T. Edwards, *Morocco Bound*, 18, 82-85.

[13] Letter to Aaron Copland, January 1933, included in *In Touch: the Letters of Paul Bowles*, 109.

slightly more generous budget), would go on indefinitely, I should not have pursued it with such fanatical ardor" (*Without Stopping* 165).

Regarding his own position as a traveler, he considered himself as an "invisible spectator," somebody that observes what happens around him without interfering. At the same time, the author was aware that his presence was an alien element to the surrounding culture. He writes in his autobiography about one of his first visits to Fez, in 1931: "Even with my past practice of pretending not to exist, I could not do it in Morocco. A stranger as blond as I was all too evident. I wanted to see whatever was happening continue exactly as if were not there. Harry [Dunham, a photographer who Bowles had met in Berlin] could not grasp this; he expected his presence to change everything and in the direction which interested him. I told him that was not an intelligent way to travel" (*Without Stopping* 131).

In "The Challenge to Identity," a short article published in *The Nation* in 1958, Bowles expressed his view regarding travel literature. First of all, the author asks himself about the contemporary target of travel literature: are they prospect travelers or stay-at-homes who enjoyed other traveler's experiences? Bowles thinks that those who ventured forth – "those who have gone and those who hope to go" (*Travels* 239)– were already a few in the 1950s and that that minority preferred to read actual guides and other documents with basic information on the places they were going to visit rather than relying on "second-hand experience" (*Travels* 240). Bowles considered that those kind of travel books were to disappear, according to his own definition of the genre: "What is a travel book? For me it is the story of what happened to one person in a particular place, and nothing more that that; it does not contain hotel and highway information, lists of useful phrases, statistics, or hints as to what kind of clothing is needed by the intending visitor. It may be that such books form a category which is doomed to extinction. I hope not, because there is nothing I enjoy more than reading an accurate account by an intelligent writer of what

happened to him away from home" (*Travels* 240). Bowles's definition of travel book is not far away from Fussell's, as both considered it an autobiographic memoir of a voyage. He also includes in the category of travel literature, although he differentiates them in terms of subject-matter and approach, the autobiographic, confessional accounts written by displaced persons in a foreign environment. For Bowles, the charm of these narratives is their subjectivity, "this unequivocal placing of emphasis upon personal attitudes and reflections" (241). Far from disappearing, travel books are widely published and read at present, perhaps by stay-at-home readers that want to experience what the travelers felt in an age in which tourism has reached every corner of the world. Bowles is missing here an important quality of modern travel writing: the ability to provoke nostalgia. Using Marc Augé's concept, to relive through writing the "*impossible voyage*," that journey that we would never do, the setting for new encounters and the discovery of new places and peoples.[14]

With his definition of the genre, Bowles is demonstrating that he was a fan of travel literature and, as a dedicated reader, he mentions his favorite choices, all of them novelists who also wrote travel books: Graham Greene, Evelyn Waugh, Aldous Huxley and André Gide. According to Bowles, their books are the best in the genre for the subject-matter they share: the conflict between writer and place, which reaches its height when this "struggle is faithfully recorded" (*Travels* 240). Honesty is a paramount condition of travel writing: even if it is based of the subjective impressions, the author should stick to the truth when describing his or her own reactions. Likewise, the author's personality should be presented as objectively as possible, to let the reader gauge the veracity of the record by himself or herself. Truth is an elusive and sometimes contradictory concept: according to Bowles, for Moroccans "there is a truth for everyone, and no one truth carries away all the others"

[14] See Augé, Marc, *L'Impossible voyage. Le tourisme et ses images*, 15-16.

(*Conversations* 66). As Zoubida Hamdaoui has pointed out in her dissertation, this idea "reveals Bowles as a liberal, a free spirit, a person who rejects any idea of a monopoly on the truth."[15] This way, truth can be also linked to the power of imagination, the power to see things the way we wish them to be (*Conversations* 142). So the "best" truth is the perceiver's truth, because there are no other, bigger, truths. Truth is individual: if someone believes something, then that is true for the perceiver (*Conversations* 105). It is no strange then that he also declared in another interview that "truth comes out in fiction. The truth about a person, if one knows how to read between the lines" (*Conversations* 197). In travel writing as well, truth lies in the writer's ability to report his impressions and reactions faithfully, but it is going to be at the same time a very "personal" truth. Thus, the "challenge to identity" would be the travel itself as well as the writer's ability to modify his behavior and imagination "to dealing, not with the question of writing, but with his own relation to the external reality around him" (*Travels* 242).

Going back to the subject-matter of the travel writing, we see a match with the alleged central theme in his writings to which I alluded in the previous section, the conflict of the "civilized man" when contacting a "primitive society and its natural man," another reason to analyze his fiction under the lenses of the travel writing and Orientalist studies.

Bowles ends "The Challenge to Identity" by reflecting on the irruption of tourism in the landscape of the travel writer: as the place becomes more accessible for tourists, the possibilities of having "real" contact with the place decrease. Furthermore, he denounces the "sinister design in government-sponsored tourist bureaus: a conscious intent to discourage personal relationships between strangers and residents" (*Travels* 243), that is, to

[15] See Hamdaoui, Zoubida, *Themes and Story-telling Strategies in Paul Bowles's North-African Fiction*. Granada: Editorial de la Universidad de Granada, 2013. 5-6.

dismantle the contact with the other through official guides, fixed rates and leaflets, to avoid any possibility of conflict.

For Fussell, tourism was more than a danger for travel writing: he pronounced the genre had died in 1939 with the beginning of World War II: "we are all tourists now, and there is no escape" (Fussell 46), he stated. Besides his comments in "The Challenge to Identity," Bowles considered tourists and travelers could be coetaneous. It was a question of attitude, of perspective. Bowles explained the difference through Port in *The Sheltering Sky*: "He did not think of himself as a tourist; he was a traveler. The difference is partly one of time, he would explain. Whereas the tourist generally hurries back home at the end of a few weeks or months, the traveler, belonging no more to one place than to the next, moves slowly, over periods of years, from one part of the earth to another" (*The Sheltering Sky* 10). Bowles did not hide his lack of sympathy for the tourists. After describing a visit to Agadir in his autobiography, he comments that by the 1970s it was being deprived of its "flavor" by commercial exploitation. "Now that all trace of charm had vanished from the entire area, the Moroccans are making Agadir into a tourist center. Why not? Tourists would go anywhere" (*Without Stopping* 152).

Bowles, like Port, had time to enjoy living in different places throughout his life. However, he was conscious that the traveler's personality could coexist with the tourist's. And so, he defined himself as one during a trip to Levante and Catalonia. Having heard Barcelona's Barrio Chino was one of the most vicious quarters in Europe, he visited it with Bruce Morrisette and Daniel Burns: "like good tourists […] we were satisfied as to its depravity" (*Without Stopping* 154). A tourist, according to Augé, is satisfied visiting whatever is supposed to be worth visiting. The tourist departs from home with a preconceived set of ideas and clichés about a place and presumes it will match his or her expectations. Bowles could not or did not want to call himself a traveler when he was just

passing through Barcelona to visit its highlights, to find a confirmation for what they already new about the Barrio Chino. But he could call himself a traveler when he was spending long periods of time abroad or when he was traveling without any destination or any goal in mind.

Port's reflects upon a second difference between the tourist and the traveler, as "the former accepts his own civilization without question; not so the traveler, who compares it with the others, and rejects those elements he finds not to his liking. And the war was one facet of the mechanized age he wanted to forget" (*The Sheltering Sky* 13). For Bowles, travelers had the ability to overcome nationality, to choose to forget whatever aspects from their culture they wanted. There is a heavy dose of self-conscious escapism and ready-made cosmopolitanism in this statement: if one does not like his or her own country, then one can pick up other aspects from another one. For Brian T. Edwards, the formulation of this project is made on American terms, as travel is compared throughout the novel as "an act of pioneering" (*Morocco Bound* 92). We will have to discern if Bowles was indeed translating the American frontier in his representation of the Sahara in *The Sheltering Sky*, as Edwards has argued,[16] or if he was reproducing the commonplaces about the Maghreb from previous travel writings.

Bowles also reflected upon the conscious appropriation of foreign cultures in "Windows on the Past," a travel article on Seville that he wrote for *Holiday* magazine in 1955. He writes about the power of books to encourage the travelers to immerse themselves in different cultures: "The book [Lorca's *Romancero Gitano*] is not much more than a point of departure, a catalyzing agent. But like the fortune teller's globe, it serves to focus the attention and induce the almost trancelike state he needs in order to feel that he is participating in the cultural life of the place. He wants to know this strange flat city of

[16] See *Morocco Bound: Disorienting America's Maghreb, from* Casablanca *to the Marrakech Express*, 92-94.

gardens and burning sunlight, make a part of it his own, and take it back with him to the United States" (*Travels* 101). Books are the gate to foreign cultures, they make the traveler "feel" (a possible mirage effect?) they are part of another culture, paving the way for the encounter with the other. A traveler can take home a piece of a foreign culture, just as tourists take souvenirs back: "The American will be seeking to capture something he feels he needs, and when he returns home it will be intangible trophies of this sort which he will prize above all his others" (*Travels* 101). And so, experience in a foreign environment is a precious token for one's culture. In the same article, Bowles defines culture as "essentially a matter of using the past to give meaning to the present." According to the author, for Americans, European culture became a supplier of "that lost childhood which never happened, but whose evocation can be so instrumental in helping us to locate ourselves in time and space" (*Travels* 103). Culture, then, is a double ground: at a social level, it is a pool containing elements from the past that helps us to locate us in time and space at present, but at an individual level, it is an artifact that can be modified by individuals in order to forge their personality, a product of choice, a result from experiences, readings and travels. That quest for the "lost childhood" the American travelers allegedly pursued in Europe since the times of the *grand tour* works for Bowles in Morocco as a quest for primitivism.

Despite his distaste for tourists in general, Bowles paradoxically helped to create a tourist image of Tangier and Morocco: he would involuntarily become not only the conduit of the "liberating environment" of Tangier, as we will see in Chapter 4, but also a "tourist site himself," a figure that appeared in the guidebooks in the 1990s "as something like required reading and as a part of the scenery," as Brian T. Edwards has pointed out (*Morocco Bound* 83).

2.4. Features of the travel writing tradition in the writings of Paul Bowles

This chapter is divided in four subsections: the travel, the place, the other, and the traveler. In the first one I will analyze how the writer approaches the travel, how is the tone of the narratives, what is the rhetoric employed, and what is the traveler's perspective. In the second I will study in depth the different aspects of the land that shape a travel narrative and the inherent features of the place in the Orientalist tradition. The third subsection deals with the representations of the other and the other as an interlocutor. In the last subsection I will turn to the figure of the traveler, his intentions, and the meaning of the travel.

It is worthwhile to point out that travel precedes writing in the case of Paul Bowles. Even though his first contact with North Africa was in 1931, he did not start writing fiction until 1945. In fact, Bowles did not start writing travel essays until the early fifties. However, those first travels had an important impact on his writing career and early works. Besides, the traveler's attitude of these first voyages is traceable in his letters and his autobiography, *Without Stopping*, published in 1974. And many of the impressions captured in this writings would be transferred to his fiction, as well as his general conceptions of the country and his attitude as a traveler.

Thanks to the article "The Travel to Identity," we know that Bowles was an admirer of travel literature and some of his favorite authors. Regarding the travel writing tradition in Morocco, there is some information in a letter to writer John Hopkins, dating from 1986. Hopkins himself had recently finished *The Tangier Diaries, 1962-1979* (1998), where he recorded his life in Tangier and Marrakech and his trips into Morocco's Sahara, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, Spanish Sahara, Mauritania, Senegal, Ghana, Nigeria, Togo, Cameroon, Swaziland and Mozambique. It seems that Bowles was aware of the existence of a tradition but he was not directly familiar with many authors from the 1930s: "Travel books about

Tangier and the Sahara in the thirties? The only one I can think of is Wyndham Lewis's *Journey into Barbary* (1931). But I don't know how heavily one can rely on his accuracy. Undoubtedly there are French ones, but I can't even think of them offhand. It ought not to be difficult to imagine the landscape and life then, remembering what things were like when you first arrived, and erasing whatever gadgets came between the 30's and 60's (like radios and gas stations). Everything has changed much faster during the years you've been here than it did between the 'thirties and 'fifties, I should say" (*In Touch* 528). There are two implicit subjects which are very relevant: that the "accuracy" is a fundamental element of travel books, as he had expressed in the essay "The Challenge to identity," and that his interest for old travel books laid in their capacity to report a time before the Westernization of Morocco took place, something easily imagined according to the author. In his own travel articles, far from pursuing this tendency to reproduce an idyllic North Africa by way of imagination, Bowles tried to practice this accuracy by elaborating on the influences and repercussions of Westernization. Knowingly or not, he was falling into one of the most common trends of travel writing in the twentieth century: the regretful account of a disappearing reality.

2.4.1. The travel

In 1956, Paul Bowles wrote a long introduction for *Yallah* ("Let's go"), a German edition of a book of photographs of the Sahara by Peter W. Haeberlin. The book was translated into English the following year.[17] The photographer followed by car one of the three existing routes in the Sahara (Algiers-M'Zab-Ghardaïa-El Goléa-In Salah-Zinder) at that time, and Bowles, who knew the route from his former travels and had his characters from *The Sheltering Sky* follow it too, described the landscape, peoples and customs of that part of the Sahara in the introduction. This is quite a traditional piece of travel writing, in

[17] Paul Bowles and Peter W. Haeberlin. *Yallah*. New York: McDowell, Obolensky. 1957.

the sense that it maintains the tone and the rhetoric of some of the previous traveling accounts and it offers a good approach to the discourse on travel.

The first lines of the essay immediately evoke the narratives of exploration: "The Western Sahara is one of the last great terrae incognitae left on this shrinking planet —a vast, mysterious lunar land which seems almost to possess natural laws of it own. It could scarcely be nearer to Europe without being in Europe, and yet the traveler there could not feel himself farther from the world he knows" (*Yallah* 5). The planet "shrinks" because there are no more "virgin" places to go. The main attraction of the Sahara is the possibility to be discovered, as well as its vicinity to Europe. Bowles stresses his argument, the area it is still unknown and there is the possibility that it goes back to its former "wilderness": "Since it is fashionable at the moment to believe that man has more or less completed his conquest of nature, people speak confidently of having 'subdued' the Sahara because they have managed to scratch three tiny trails across its surface… But let the rising tide of Moslem desire from independence from European domination move a little further south from Algeria, a little farther north from the Senegal, and the three narrow ribbons of trail would be useless" (*Yallah* 5). The explorer appears in the next page: "This book is a record of one man's journey southward" (*Yallah* 6). In this statement there is an implicit assumption that the traveler is going to present an objective record of his journey, nothing more, nothing less. The word "southward" evokes a sense of immensity, of limitlessness, and it could be easily replaced for "the unknown," "what lies beyond," and tells without telling of unnamed dangers. It recalls powerfully the quotation by Kafka that opens the third section of *The Sheltering Sky*: "from a certain point onward, there is no turning back" (266). In the next lines emerges an epic tone:

> "He went across the desolate stretches of the Algerian tell, entire regions of which are hidden beneath snow in the winter months, to Djelfa, one of the saddest places in the world—this in spite of the fact that the town is in the mountains of the Ouled Naïl

> and is the center from which the Berber dancing girls bearing that name set out in their travels to gladden the hearts of men, and to which they return, after having earned their dowries in the brothels of North Africa, on their way back to wed the men of their tribe who are waiting for them. South of here are the gaps in the final range of saw-tooth mountains which separate the north from the desert, and the first oasis, Laghouat"
>
> (*Yallah* 6)

In this fragment Bowles efficiently romanticizes the journey made by Haeberlin: it is full of dangerous and threatening conditions, climatic obstacles, and sad places with erotic connotations. The paragraph, intended to describe the photographer's route, turns to explain where are the Berber prostitutes using patronizing overtones.

The narrator in this piece of travel writing is not the traveler himself, that would be Peter Haeberlin, and neither is the "real" Bowles, for the "I" does not appear in the text and his personal experiences in the Sahara are absent, but an authoritative male narrator who seems to be an expert on the area and who proceeds to enumerate the different peoples who populate the desert and their customs: description of their cities and government, occupations and jobs, marriage and birth rites, ethnic distinctions between their inhabitants, existence of slavery, religious practices, clothing, languages, local architecture and local medicine. That is, a complete ethnographic catalogue. The people and their customs are fixed with the ethnographic, timeless present, or "timeless eternal," as Said defined it (*Orientalism* 72). They are passive objects observed by an undetermined seer that overlooks places and peoples with a bird's eye view. In the description of peoples, the Tuareg are the most effectively romanticized: "To lovers of the Sahara, its most fascinating inhabitants are the Tuareg […] they have chosen to live in one of the most distant and desolate regions of the world —the very center of the Sahara. There are very few of them left, and their purely mediaeval customs are fast disappearing. A race whose knights still engage in jousts with lance and shield can scarcely fail to attract attention" (*Yallah* 10). The

Tuareg have not evolved; they are primitives, almost Mediaeval knights, whose existence came to a stop long ago. This was a common way of describing the other in the Orientalist discourse, in terms of genetic universals "as his 'primitive' state, his primary characteristics" (*Orientalism* 120).

At the same time, Bowles also introduces common subjects in the narratives of exploration, such as the naturalistic descriptions, including landscapes, fauna, the characteristics of Lake Chad and kinds of dunes, *ergs*, sand, etc. Just like in Alexander von Humboldt's views on South America, Bowles offers an analytical description of the Sahara, "but in a language that is also filled with drama, struggle, and a certain sensuality," as Mary Louise Pratt points out (*Imperial Eyes* 119).

2.4.2. The place

"Fez" was the first piece of travel writing Bowles wrote for a magazine. It was published by *Holiday* in July 1950, one year after the release of *The Sheltering Sky*. "Fez" is a canonical piece of travel writing in the sense that the Moroccan city is described through the author's impressions on local architecture, native inhabitants and culture and customs. He opens the article by declaring: "Fez is a city whose site was chosen purely for aesthetic reasons" (*Travels* 39). Bowles justifies his statement arguing that the beauty of the landscape motivated Idriss II to settle on the spot in the 9th century. Although Bowles never resided permanently in Fez, he visited it frequently and always felt connected to the city. Discussing his and her wife preferred places in Morocco in his autobiography, Bowles stresses his love for Fez but specifies that his interest "was a touristic one, but Tangier fascinated Jane because that was where she had Moslem friends to whose houses she could go" (*Without Stopping* 284). Whereas Jane was more interested in the interaction with others, he was more interested in the architecture and picturesque aspects of Fez. For him

too, Fez was a source of aesthetic pleasure, a scene to be contemplated. Moreover, Fez proved to be a window into the past, a Mediaeval token, "since the place is virtually unchanged" (*Travels* 39). As we have seen, timelessness is a usual feature of the travel writing tradition in Morocco. Similarly, the traveler Samuel Levy Bensusan reflected at the turn of the 20th century that Moroccans lead a simple existence, the kind of life "that has not altered for centuries" (Bensusan 26). For Bowles, this time impasse is not an alien feature for the Western visitor, because "the removal is rather in time. A thousands years ago the cities of Europe must have been very much like this" (*Travels* 39). And so, the trip to Fez becomes a travel back in time, a journey to a shared past. As we have seen, former travel writers already made the connection between Morocco and time travel: Edith Wharton connected the notion of time travel with the Romantic quality of the ruins. For her, passing through the fallen gates of the town was like being "completely reabsorbed into the past" (Wharton 27). Wyndham Lewis' view is more complex and it is more connected to the history of all mankind: stepping on Africa is equivalent to opening a universal history book; you are "behind, or beyond, *la cité antique.*" The time travel goes hand in hand with the spatial displacement: the farther you go, the "more complete is the illusion of a radical temporal displacement" (*Filibusters into Barbary* 39).

Regarding the description of the city, its external aspect, instead of focusing on the vividness of the colors and the variety of smells, as it was customary in previous traveling accounts, the writer describes Fez through its sounds: "Everything that moves inside the walls moves on legs, so one hears no horns or bells. What rises from the city day by day is a humming: two hundred thousand human voices blended into one sound. At night there is absolute silence, unless the women of some house have gone upstairs to the terrace and are beating drums. Five times a day the muezzin calls from the tower of each mosque […] There are more than a hundred mosques, and they can all be heard at once from the

surrounding hills" (*Travels* 41).[18] In an unusual way, exoticism is conveyed through sounds, something that makes sense bearing in mind Bowles was a composer before becoming a writer. Traditionally, travel writers had focused on the description of things, frequently avoiding the contact with the other. According to Tzvetan Todorov, the interest lies in the local color rather than on the intersubjective experience.[19] The author/traveler becomes the only subject of the narration and his or her descriptions turn into a mere visual display. In Bowles's sound landscape, the presence of the other becomes an abstract, single voice. At the same time, the author is concerned with the inclusion of the other in his writings.

2.4.3. The other

In "Fez," Bowles describes the figure of Sidi Driss el Yacoubi, an old gentleman, presumably the father of Ahmed ben Driss el Yacoubi, whom Bowles had met in Fez in 1948 and eventually would become his lover. Sidi Driss embodies the traditional Fassi, the keeper of old ways. He is presented by Bowles through his daily activities, his visits to the mosque, the gardens and the houses of his friends, and Bowles quotes his disregard for modern devices such as cars. The voice of Sidi Abdallah Lalami, a "modern-minded, bourgeois Fassi" (*Travels* 43) is also included in the article, as well as other unnamed Moroccans. This inclusion of the other and their opinions, so absent from former traveling accounts, coexists with a collective representation of some of the inhabitants of the city. It is the case of the young bourgeoisie, criticized by Bowles for their objections to all things traditional, such us music, customs and clothing. It is interesting to notice that the author chooses to speak for the people with whom he disagrees. "Cairo is their idea of civilized

[18] For an insightful approach to the importance of sounds in Bowles's fiction, see Barry Tharaud "Language, Noise, Silence: Communication and Community in Paul Bowles's *Let It Come Down.*" *Bowles, Beats, Tangier*, Tangier: Collaborative Media International, 2010.
[19] Tzvetan Todorov. *Nous et les autres*, 347.

place" (*Travels* 47). Egypt, once "the vindication of Western imperialism […] an almost academic example of Oriental backwardness" (*Orientalism* 25), had reached the independence from the British empire in 1936 and were the paradigm of effective autonomous government and the cultural reference for most of North African countries throughout the 1940s and 1950s. As he reaffirmed in different occasions, Bowles was partly attracted to Morocco for its cultural, ancestral manifestations, such as music and ritual performed by religious brotherhoods, belief in magic and its daily life use. These manifestations, traditionally regarded by colons and travelers alike as backward and/or picturesque sights, had negative connotations for the nationalists and young Moroccans, for they conveyed a primitive image of the country they preferred to avoid in order to overcome the alleged European superiority over Oriental backwardness. This attraction to exoticism could easily turn into the mummification of the native culture. According to Franz Fanon, even if travelers and colonizers are concerned with native culture they do not take into consideration the "values borne by the culture, incarnated by men. Rather, this behaviour betrays a determination to objectify, to confine, to imprison […] Exoticism is one of the forms of this simplification. It allows no cultural confrontation. There is on the one hand a culture in which qualities of dynamism, of growth, of depth can be recognized. As against this, we find characteristics, curiosities, things, never a structure" ("Racism and Culture" 34-35).

For Bowles, the worst criticism of the "indigenous elements in the culture" (*Travels* 46) was carried to the extreme by these young nationalist Moroccans. Besides, this kind of manifestations coexisted with Islam but they were endangered. In "Fez," Bowles explained that the "barbaric side of Moroccan life" was absent from the city, alluding to the disappearance of the public performances of the Gnaoua (*ginawa*) and Aïssaoua

(*aisawiyya*).[20] "This does not mean that the cults have been abolished. On certain occasions one has only to travel an hour from Fez to see the Aïssaoua eating their scorpions and serpents, lacerating themselves and drinking their own blood while the women scream and dance themselves into unconsciousness. The Gnaoua are Negroes and the Aïssaoua are Berbers, both have accepted the Islamic faith in such ways as to suit their emotional needs, but the orthodox Moslem population of Morocco will allow them no latitude" (*Travels* 46). These are religious brotherhoods or *tariqas,* usually organized around the figure of a saint, as it is the case of the Aisawiyya; they derive from the Sufi doctrine, although frequently this doctrine has evolved to simple ritual, detached from its original meaning, or has become mixed with previous religious beliefs, and so disregarded by Islamic orthodoxy. Bowles described frequently these kind of ritual practices, both in his fiction[21] and non-fiction writings,[22] as in the present case. Bowles seemed to posses an important amount of knowledge of these ritual performances, which had impressed him since his first visits to the country. The first time Bowles witnesses a brotherhood in action was precisely in Fez, in 1932, as he wrote in his autobiography: "At that time more than half the population of Morocco belonged to one or another of the religious confraternities which enable their adepts to achieve transcendence of normal consciousness (a psychic necessity all over the African continent) and to do so in Islamic terms. For most educated Moroccans the mere existence of the cults is an abomination; with the emergence of nationalism they were suppressed more or less successfully for two decades or more" (*Without Stopping* 150).

[20] When transcribing Arabic or Moroccan terms, I have tried to respect Bowles's choice, opting for the French transcription. When quoting other authors, I have tried to respect their choices too. In those cases that needed clarification, I have opted for the Arabic transcription.

[21] See *The Spider's House* for a full description of a Gnaoua performance (334), and *Let it Come Down*, where the main character witnesses a Hamadsha ritual (270).

[22] See "The Rif, To Music," first published in 1960 in the magazine *Kulchur* and then included three years later in *Their Heads are Green*, and "Africa Minor," published in *Holiday* in 1959 and included in the same volume. See also *Without Stopping*, where Bowles describes a Jilala performance in a café in Xauen in 1951: "A mountain Jilali came in, sat beside us, and soon went into trance. As he danced, he slashed himself, covered his face with the blood, and licked it from his arms and fingers. It was tremendously impressive, the more so for having been done without a word being spoken" (*Their Heads are Green and Their Hands Are Blue* 310).

With his interest and knowledge of these performances, Bowles takes a step further, moving from the role of traveler to the role of the anthropologist, concerned with the preservation of traditional practices. As a traveler, he collects impressions; as an anthropologist, he goes beyond the mere observation and description, providing a background and further details, and manifesting his personal opinions.

It is interesting to notice that the author chooses to speak for the people with whom he disagrees. As we have seen, the use of the collective *they*, so frequent in the previous traveling accounts, usually brings attached negative connotations, and it was an imperial device to homogenize the Africans to be subjected, "that is, produced as subjects" (*Imperial Eyes* 64). Pratt maintains that the collective use of *they/he* or similar formulae ("The Moors," "The Moroccans," "The Arabs," "The Berbers," "The Fassi") helped to fix African subjects into a timeless, "ethnographic" present, where all "their" actions and reactions are repetitions of "their" normal habits, as it was the case of Budgett Meakin's *Life in Morocco and Glimpses Beyond.*[23] But Bowles is always ambivalent and this is one of the dualities we are going to find in his writings: the use of collective and abstract *they* together with the presence of individual (anonymous or named) testimonies. We will have to determinate the intentions behind those uses and to find the hidden implications on Bowles's discourse.

Another feature linked to the Orientalist discourse of previous writers is the allusion to the *mektoub*. This a formula that means "it is written," a way of accepting God's plan tacitly without any second thoughts, a way of embracing destiny without hesitation. Bowles defines it as "the will of Allah […] The stone wall against which any argument inevitably crashes" (*Travels* 48). According to Said, Orientals are "imbued with a feeling of Oriental fatalism" (*Orientalism* 102). In the case of the travel accounts previously studied in this

[23] See pages 266-274.

dissertation, only Bensusan connected the notion of fatalism to the Moroccan mindset, even introducing the *mektoub* formula. For Bensusan, fatalism is linked to the willingness to believe in mysteries, an ability Westerners have long forgotten. Moroccans are connected to a former age that we Europeans have replaced by technology and empiricism. As Said explained fatalism is one of the surviving stereotypes of Orientalism that continue to persist in the Postcolonial discourse (*Orientalism* 354).

In "Fez," Bowles also demonstrates further ethnographic knowledge of other cultural topics unfamiliar for the former travelers: the Koranic laws or *El H'aoudh*, "a somewhat simplified version of the Koranic laws written in Berber for Moroccans a few centuries ago" (*Travels* 48). Another novelty is the mention of drugs, specifically the *majoun*, a hashish paste: how he tried it in the house of a merchant with other men and its effects.

Many of these topics are also addressed in the travel articles Bowles continued writing. In "Letter from Tangier," published in the *London Magazine* in 1954, we encounter again the notion of timelessness. In this occasion, Bowles draws an opposition between the world in which the Moroccans live and the one that the Westerners inhabit: "They are just beginning to awaken to the fact that the difference between their world and the world outside is not one in kind, but in time. It is a dangerous discovery […] But now they have decided to go in our direction they are dismayed to see how far behind us they come in the procession. Not knowing where we are trying to go or why we want to go there, being merely determined to go along with us, they imagine that they can do so merely by ignoring the historical distance that separates our own cultures" (*Travels* 97-98).

Bowles is aware of the limitations of travel writing, about its inherent contradictions and about the expectations of the authors and the readers of travel writing. If anything,

Bowles is being honest about the impossibility of offering a fair portrait of the Other and maintaining the Westerner's expectations at the same time. Indeed, the subject was delicate, as delicate is the genre of travel writing.

The city of Fez is also the theme of a different essay written in 1984 as part of a journal. It became the accompanying text of the photograph book *Morocco* by Barry Brukoff (1991) and was entitled "Fez: Behind the Walls". Even though forty years had passed since the author made his warning against the dangers of the Westernization and the disappearance of the traditional way of life, in this essay the premises are similar and prevails the idea of Fez as a place where time has come to a stop. "Unlike other cities which enjoyed their period of greatness in remote times […] Fez dos not have to rely upon its ancient structures for its claim to importance. Its interest lies not so much in relics of the past as in the life of the people there; that life *is* the past, still alive and functioning. It would be difficult to find another city anywhere in which the everyday vicissitudes of medieval urban life can be studied in such detail" (*Travels* 444). The attraction for the traveler and the tourist are not the monuments or other sites, but the people. Bowles is objectifying the inhabitants of the city for the sake of the Westerners' enjoyment, they become objects of study, a living and silent museum of what a Medieval city looked like with its guilds of artisans and their handmade goods. Moreover, Bowles deplores the decreasing quality of the crafts as a result of the presence of tourism, which corrupts the workmanship with its consumerist presence. Towards the conclusion of the essay, the author reflects upon the socioeconomic changes that are also transforming the aspect of the city: the poverty of the region has made the well-off city dwellers to move to more blooming cities such as Casablanca, while the impoverished country-dwellers have occupied their place inside the walls of the medina looking for new opportunities in the city. Bowles predicts that such changes would eventually alter the image of the medina as

the buildings are falling into disrepair: "it is the people from outside the walls who have taken over the city, and their conquest, a natural and inevitable process, spells its doom. That Fez should still be there today, unchanged in its outward form, is the surprising phenomenon" (*Travels* 452). Here is implied one more paradox of the travel writing genre: the attraction of the place is precisely that it has not been so affected by changes as other cities in the same area. But then there is a call for the readership, prospect travelers and tourists —it can be forgotten that many of Bowles's travel essays where published in holiday magazines such as *Holiday*— to witness with their own eyes this living relic of the past. This wish of preservation is contrary to the aim of this kind of travel articles or the aim of travel literature in general terms.

Holiday magazine published in 1955 the essay "The Incredible Arab," later published as "Mustapha and His Friends" in the first edition of *Their Heads Are Green and Their Hands Are Blue* (1963). It is a collective portrait of a group of illiterate, working class Moroccan Moslems. Even though Bowles would frequently include the name of his interlocutors and usually singularized the other in his writings, this is the most prominent example of depersonalization in Bowles's work, a device commonly used by former travel writers to describe the Moroccans. Besides Cunninghame Graham, that tried to avoid generalization in his report, writers as different as Pierre Loti, Joseph Thomson, Budgett Meakin, Edith Wharton, and J.M. MacLeod perceived "the Moors" as a collective entity, which became a passive object under observation. Even though Bowles limited his generalization to the social class of working Moroccan Moslems, the discourse remains notoriously similar: their behavior is reported as "innocent" and "spontaneous" (748), distrustful and suspicious (751), opportunistic (750) and dramatic (754), deeply religious (748-749) and yet morally ambivalent, as they not believe "in the same good or evil as we do" (*Travels* 749). Their "disrespectful" attitude towards women is considered "the very

heart of his civilization, conditioning almost every aspect of it; even the architecture has evolved with an eye to providing the females of the family group with a maximum of seclusion" (*Travels* 754). For the author, even if "feminine liberation" is desirable, it cannot be imposed and it has to be a change "from within, from the women themselves" (755). Besides, living with Mustapha and his friends one has the impression that "is living among children playing at being grown ups" (755), while at the same time they are an example of the natural man who "has not yet abrogated the pact between nature and man, according to whose terms she commands and he obeys" (*Travels* 759).

They are also described as fervent defenders of the tyrannical rule ("there never was so good a sultan as Haroun el Rashid" (*Travels* 749). This is not the only reference to *The Thousand and One Nights*, as "Mustapha" is also "the adventurer par excellence" who expects life to have the "variety and flavor" of the Arabic classic (*Travels* 753). All these features clearly pertain to the Orientalist discourse. The mention to the *The Thousand and One Nights* becomes particularly ironic, so present in the travel writing tradition, so determinant in the construction of the Orientalism, as if the Moroccan themselves were participating of the same Orientalist conventions.

However, there are also positive features attributed to this abstract Mustapha. He is depicted as independent (754), imaginative (752), hospitable (758), living a simple life which leads to "foster simple virtues," able to commit anything to memory (758), acute and observant (*Travels* 758).

Bowles was conscious of having written a polemic and unfair collective portrait. In an interview with Robert F. Patteson in the 1980s, the author explained that "Mustapha and His Friends" was excluded from the second edition of *Their Heads Are Green and Their Hands Are Blue* because it was written before the Moroccan independence, that took place

in 1956, and the description was not longer appropriate: "I didn't think it was any longer applicable. It pertained to colonial rule. The way Moroccans communicate and relate to each other today is entirely different. And it didn't seem very courteous, since I've been living here so many years. But the point is it's no longer applicable. They no longer behave that way."[24] By abrogating of this essay, he was also challenging one of the most extended preconceived ideas on the Oriental other: his impossibility to change, to evolve, and the author's impossibility to offer a timeless report of a people, a refusal of the ethnographic present employed in the essay.

In any case, this essay is a very controversial example among Bowles's critics. The author knew it could lead to imperialist misinterpretations; he acknowledged in the introduction of *Their Heads Are Green and Their Hands Are Blue* that a French woman had it translated into French and distributed a couple of hundreds of copies between Moslem politicians "to illustrate the typical reactionary attitude of Americans toward oppressed people" (*Their Heads Are Green and Their Hands Are* 8). Ralph M. Coury deplored that they were reported as "lying, thieving, scheming, manipulative, aggressive, illogical, consumed with hatred of women, and lacking in self-consciousness as a result of a kind of infantilism" (Lacey 106).

Arab scholars were more implacable, especially in the past. Referring to "Mustapha and His Friends," Asad Al-Ghalith argues in his article "Paul Bowles's Portrayal of Islam" that Bowles's vision of Islam was limited and shallow: "he gleaned a superficial knowledge of the faithful's devotion through his connections with limited segments of North African society—those that suited his own quirks and tastes." [25] In *L'idéologie arabe*

[24] "Tangier Days: Talking with Paul Bowles, 1984-1988" Web *Conjunctions*, Bard College (November 28, 1998): http://www.conjunctions.com/webcon/bowles.htm. Bowles also published in the magazine *Conjunctions* "Earth" by Mohammed Mrabet (translated from Arabic by Paul Bowles) (1:120-138) and the short story "Massachusetts 1932" (5:122-126).
[25] In *The International Fiction Review* 19.2.1992:103-108.

contemporaine (1982), Abdallah Laroui signaled Bowles as one of the authors responsible for a revival of the "folklore" generated within a world imperial system. For Laraoui, Moroccans would never feel identified with Bowles's representation, mainly because he "never leaves, and will never leave, his bourgeois culture which alone gives value and sense to this old humanity that he strives to save from oblivion."[26] And we cannot fail to mention how Mohamed Choukri's famously stated that Paul Bowles liked Morocco but dislike Moroccans.[27]

However, it is decidedly restricted to dismiss Bowles works as Orientalist without looking for elements that differentiate them from other previous and contemporary examples. The notion of representing the other, colonial or postcolonial, remains troublesome. Edward Said writes about "an endeavor as complex and as problematic as an asymptote, with consequences for certainty and decidability as fraught with difficulties as can be imagined" ("Representing the Colonized: Anthropology's Interlocutors" 294). Said argues that the representation of the colonized does not change with the arrival of independence, but it remains a "category that included the inhabitants of newly independent status as well as subject peoples in adjacent territories still settled by Europeans" (294). The result was that colonized becomes synonymous with underdeveloped. When Bowles decided that "Mustapha and His Friends" was no "longer applicable" after the Moroccan independence, he was refusing to represent the other as a colonial subject, trying to interrupt this concatenation of stereotyped representations.

Coury has detected an emergence of a body of Arab criticism favorable to Bowles that reveals "a profound intellectual shift" in the last years, specially referred to Bowles's

[26] Quoted in Ralph M. Coury and R. Kevin Lacey, *Writing Tangier*. New York: Peter Lang, 2009. 130.
[27] See Mohamed Choukri, *Jean Genet, Tennessee Williams and Paul Bowles in Tangier*, 136. Moroccan scholar Mohammed Elkouche maintains that Bowles's primary interest in Tangier was the "decadent moral atmosphere" of sexual promiscuity and drugs ("Paul Bowles' Tangier" 115).

linguistic skills and descriptions of foreign settings (*Writing Tangier* 131). Referring to Tangier, Mohamed Dellal states that Bowles "loathes the colonizer for having drained the place of its happiness" (Dellal 26). On the other hand, Hisham Aidi concludes that "Paul Bowles is not an Orientalist in the classic sense. Morocco exists in the minds of most Westerners as an exotic impression created by a slew of travel books and exotica literature. But, without exception, Paul Bowles was the only American author who transcended this type of representation and gained notoriety for his depictions about the North African kingdom."[28] Similarly, Bouchra Benlemlih has reflected upon Bowles's positional conflict as a "traveling writer crossing postcolonial spaces," with the subsequent problems for representing Otherness. For Benlemlih, "Bowles's work moves between several locations: between 'first' and 'third world', 'central' and 'marginal.' Although he must write from 'somewhere,' that 'where' is a mix of places in one of his many itineraries and roles in his career: from first-world writer to expatriate writer, though even that description does not quite capture his state. He is changed by his travel but marked by his place of origin, and by allegiances and alienations on the way."[29]

Notwithstanding the generalizations and the reductionist stereotypes of "Mustapha and His Friends," I believe Bowles's work cannot be dismissed as imperialist propaganda. By the end of the article, Bowles again defends the idea that Mustapha and his friends would prefer a ruthless ruler than otherwise. Even though this idea seems somehow unjustified —Bowles offers an ethnographic explanation on the subject, arguing than a Muslim would rather prefer a tyrannical ruler than reminds him of the unpitying and inexorable supreme being—, he also acknowledges that no democratic system should be imposed without taking into consideration real people and the historical background of

[28] See "North Africa Imagined: Orientalism in the Writings of Paul Bowles." 123.
[29] Benlemlih, Bouchra. *Inhabiting the Exotic: Paul Bowles and Morocco*, University of Nottingham: Unpublished dissertation, 2009. 300.

their countries, an argument much repeated in the last years after the Arab Spring. After the protests in 2011 in Egypt, there were many Western and Arab voices claiming that U.S. government should not seek to impose a way of life upon others, such a democracy influenced by U.S. foreign policy.[30] In this sense, Bowles's warning would still prove to be valid.

In his travel essays of the late fifties such as "View from Tangier" (1956) and "Tangier Diary: a Postcolonial Interlude" (originally written in 1957 but posthumously published in *Travels: Collected Writings 1950-1993*), the author turns to the political situation, describing the events of the first months of independence and the atmosphere of the city. In both cases an un-nostalgic unsentimental portrait of the city is presented. "View from Tangier" was published by the leftist periodical *The Nation*, devoted to politics and culture, so the journalistic tone prevails over general references to the city, quoting instead local press and politicians speeches. The arguable imperialistic content of "Mustapha and His Friends" is completely absent here. The comments against the recent colonial rule are frequent. In "View from Tangier" he declares: "We can scarcely find fault with the Moroccans' aspirations to national independence or their efforts to right some of the injustices which have for so long prevailed in their country" (*Travels* 153). He also has sarcastic words for the situation of the cities of Ceuta and Melilla as an indisputable part of Spain even though the rest of Morocco has achieved independence: "One assume that at some point in history they became detached from the mother country and floated across to Africa," he writes in "Tangier Diary: a Postcolonial Interlude" (*Travels* 199). However, he differentiates between the attitude of French and Spanish colons and residents towards Moroccans: the latter ones, "being only slightly removed racially and culturally from the

[30] See, for instance, Oz Hassan's report *The United States after unipolarity: American democracy promotion and the 'Arab Spring'* presented to former US Secretary of State Madeline Albright in December 2011 at the Library of the Congress.

Moroccans, tended to think of the latter as human beings, whereas the French colonist's classical epithet for them was "animals" (200).

However, these arguments coexist with suspicious remarks against Moroccan nationalists, then in power, and their new regulations. "It is a good law because it was made in Rabat by Moslems, there is no need to consider it further" (*Travels* 145), ironically comments Bowles on a law passed by the new Moroccan authorities that fined drinkers 500 pesetas and six months in jail, the kind of procedure that has made of Tangier a town "provincial and hermetic" (204). In "Tangier Diary" he becomes judgmental on the behavior of nationalist authorities regarding the customs of the Spanish population to his recurrent remarks against nationalists and their urge to eradicate some aspects of the traditional local culture. Bowles argues that Christmas had always been a "great general holiday" much enjoyed by the Christian, Jewish and Muslim population. "Such unbridled festivities are not at all in keeping with the surge of puritanism being propagated by the younger generation of Moroccan patriots" (*Travels* 198). In this sense, Bowles would be blaming nationalists for depriving Tangier of its hybrid nature, one of the most salient features of the city.

2.4.4. The traveler

Bowles even had in mind the perfect foreign visitor when he wrote "Fez: Behind the Walls": somebody able to sense "a feeling of mystery" in its "dark twisting alleys, teeming with people and animals". For him, to grasp the fascination of the place "one has to be the sort of person who enjoys losing himself in the crowd and being pushed along by it, not caring where to or for how long. He must be able to attain relaxation in the idea of being helpless in the midst of that crowd, he must know how to find pleasure in the outlandish, and see beauty where it is most unlikely to appear" (*Travels* 444-445). Besides the fact that he considers that only a male traveler would eventually grasp the beauty and mystery of the

place, here there is also a good example of the relativism of exoticism as defined by Tzvetan Todorov in *Nous et les Autres*: insofar as a people and a culture are defined through the relationship with the observer, exoticism is not so much the description of a reality as an ideal of what the observer had in mind (Todorov 305). In this sense, alterity is also a relative concept, because the Self can never become the Other. According to Bowles, the traveler sometimes gets frustrated in *his* quest for the exotic, as the city can be secretive with the outsider: he generalizes by saying that the Fassi "feels intuitively that everything should be hidden: the practice of religion, his personal possessions (including his womenfolk) and above all his thoughts" (*Travels* 445).

Doubtlessly, when writing these lines Bowles had in mind his own experiences as a traveler. He talks about the "hermetic mystery of Morocco" in his autobiography (*Without Stopping* 298). Secretiveness is then a frustrating element in Moroccan culture but also an attractive quality for the writer. Perhaps the challenge for him and other travelers was to penetrate this culture. For Edward Said, Orientalism traditionally allowed a certain freedom of intercourse for the Westerner "because his was the stronger culture, he could penetrate, he could wrestle with, he could give shape and meaning to the great Asiatic mystery, as Disraeli once called it" (*Orientalism* 44). So the Westerner's privilege is to unveil this mystery for his readership.

In another travel article entitled "Africa Minor," published in the collection *Their Heads are Green and Their Hands are Blue*, Bowles elaborates on the notion of mystery as the main attraction of the area:

> "When I meet fellow Americans traveling about here in North Africa, I ask them: "What did you expect to find here?" Almost without exception, regardless of the way they expressed it, the answer, reduced to its simplest terms, is: a sense of mystery. They expect mystery, and they find it, since fortunately it is a quality difficult to extinguish all in a moment. They find it in the patterns of sunlight filtering through the latticework that covers the souks, in the unexpected turnings and tunnels of the

> narrow streets, in the women whose features still go hidden beneath the litham, in the secretiveness of the architecture, which is such that even if the front door of a house is open, it is impossible to see inside. If they listen as well as look, they find it too in the song the lone camel driver sings by his fire before dawn, in the calling of the muezzins at night, when their voices are like bright beams of sound piercing the silence, and, most often, in the dry beat of the darbouka, the hand drum played by the women everywhere, in the great city houses and in the humblest country hut."
>
> (*Collected Stories and Later Writings* 718-719)

In short, mystery becomes a synonym for exoticism, a notion which is present in some of the early, fully Romantic accounts that I have discussed in the Appendix, such as David Urquhart's. The author of *The Pillars of Hercules* (1850) was "fascinated by the beauty and mystery of the adjoining lands" (Urquhart iii) even before setting foot in the country. He declared in the introduction that he was going to be the responsible for unveiling the "treasures unknown" to the rest the world. Beauty and mystery go also hand in hand in Wharton's *In Morocco* (1920), where she already deplored that the impression of mystery and remoteness the country offered to the visitor were doomed to vanish soon.

Actually *Their Heads Are Green and Their Hands Are Blue* (1963) was the only complete travel book Bowles produced and it was entirely made of already published articles. In any case, there is an interest in providing an accurate report of the places visited. "About half, of each piece, I think, was written in the place with which it deals; the rest was out of memory later," the author explained in a letter to James Leo Herlihy (*In Touch* 398). In the prologue to the book, he senses the inner contradictions of the genre and its tendency to overlook the presence and necessities of the Other: "It would be an absurdity to expect any group of people to maintain its present characteristics or manner of living. But the visitor to a place whose charm is a result of its backwardness is inclined to hope it will remain that way, regardless of how those who live in it may feel. The seeker of the picturesque sees the spread of improved techniques as an unalloyed abomination" (*Their Heads Are Green and Their Hands Are Blue* 7). Bowles seems aware of the limitations of

travel writing, of its inherent contradictions and of the expectations of the authors and the readers of the genre alike. In addition, he suspects that there can be other kind of critiques from the readers: "At the other end of the ideological spectrum are those who regard any objective description of things as they are today in an underdeveloped country as imperialist propaganda. Having been subjected to attack from both camps, I am aware that such countries are a delicate subject to write about (*Their Heads Are Green and Their Hands Are Blue* 7-8). In this sense, Mohamed ElKouche and other scholars[31] have criticized the role of Paul Bowles as a "reporter" of North Africa and its inhabitants accusing him of adopting a "positional superiority," as Said defined it. Bowles writings then are guilty of blatant Orientalism. For ElKouche, such superiority, "implies that Bowles was functioning throughout his literary career as the observer or 'representer,' whereas his cultural Others were mere passive objects of his observation and discursive representation" (ElKouche 118). But this statement could be valid for all the Orientalist tradition in Morocco or even for most of travel writers. If anything, Bowles is being honest about the impossibility of offering a fair portrait of the Other and maintaining the Westerner's expectations at the same time. Indeed, the subject was as delicate as the genre of travel writing. In the prologue of *Their Heads Are Green and Their Hands Are Blue*, he seems to address this paradox directly: "If people and their manner of living were alike everywhere, there would not be much point in moving from one place to another" (7). For the author, landscapes and monuments are insufficient to attract a permanent interest from the visitors; it is the inhabitants with their customs that give meaning to the places and draw the travelers' attention. Fez and its mediaeval daily life would be, as we have previously explored, the perfect example.

[31] See, for instance, Hassan Bourara, Asad Al-Galith, Brian T. Edwards, Zoubida Hamdaoui and Ralph M. Coury. For a good comparative on the subject of Bowles's Western and Arab criticism, see Ralph M. Coury "The Twain Met: Paul Bowles's Western and Arab Critics," published in *Public* 16 (1997): Entangled Territories. http://pi.library.yorku.ca/ojs/index.php/public/article/viewFile/30226/27761

As in previous articles, the author blamed in the introduction the North African nationalists for "ravaging" their own culture as a result of "an irrational longing on the part of their own educated minorities to cease being themselves and become Westerners" (*Their Heads Are Green Their Hands Are Blue* 8). In "Africa Minor" he would qualify such kind of remarks by writing:

> "No part of North Africa will again be the same sort if paradise for Europeans that it has been for them these last fifty years. The place has been thrown open to the twentieth century. With Europeanization and nationalism have come a consciousness of identity and the awareness of that identity's commercial possibilities. From now on the North Africans, like the Mexicans, will control and exploit their own charms […] Tourist land it still is, and doubtless will continue to be for a while […] Travel here is certain not so easy or so comfortable as before, and prices are many times higher than they were, but at least we meet the people on terms of equality, which is a healthier situation."
>
> (*Collected Stories and Later Writings* 732)

Under colonial rule, the relationship with the North African other was condemned to failure, as it was always a relationship of superiority. Bowles is not naïve to think that all the foreign residents are going to embrace this equality without reserves. On the question of colonialism versus self-government, Bowles argues: "The difficulty is that some of your co-residents feel one way and some the other, but all feel strongly" (733). Living in the middle of a conflict such as the colonial situation allows no room for privacy and one's affections and political inclinations are bound to become public.

"Worlds of Tangier," published in *Holiday*, March 1958, is one of the numerous essays Bowles dedicated to the city. In the first paragraphs of the essay, Bowles explains his disappointment at how Tangier has changed in the previous decades, losing its previous charm, save its amazing topography. What Bowles deplores is the decadence –or un-decadence, the newness— of the external aspect of the city. At the same time, his views are completely unsentimental: for the author there are no "points of interest" in the city (*Travels* 230), no monuments the tourists can visit, and it is, as it always has been, "little

more than an enormous market" (226), a town that only one out of nine visitors would be able to enjoy. In this way, he distances himself from the nostalgic approach of the writers of the turn of the century. And he also disassociates himself from other narratives that commented bitterly that Tangier had nothing to offer to the visitor.

In "Worlds of Tangier" the author also reflected upon the role of the traveler and the importance of the connection between himself and the city. "Since I returned here in 1947 I have spent a good many hours wandering through these passageways […] busily trying to determine the relationship between Tangier and myself" (*Travels* 226). The author feels attached to the city but the reasons remain elusive. To explain its unique quality, the author has to resort to one of the main features of Oriental travel writing: the idea of timelessness reinterpreted in his own terms: "I have not discovered very much, but at least I am now convinced that Tangier is a place where the past and the present exist simultaneously in proportionate degree, where a very much alive today is given an added depth of reality by the presence of an equally alive yesterday. In Europe, it seems to me, the past is largely fictitious; to be aware of it one must have previous knowledge of it. In Tangier the past is a physical reality as perceptible as the sunlight" (*Travels* 226). For Bowles, Tangier is not a relic of the past, like the old travelers used to say, but a place which is kept "alive" by the presence of the past, its reality enhanced by the ubiquity of yesterday. In 1958 Bowles still believed that the "character" of the place was unchanged, a crossroad of civilizations and peoples, always "in touch with the outside world" (*Travels* 229) that had shaped its personality. Can this be interpreted as a nostalgic turn, a cry for a lost era? To a certain extent, the answer is yes. But the writer thinks this authenticity of the past is alive in the people, and to his mind, they have not changed so far. The most salient spot to show the foreigners is the "spectacle of the average Moroccan's daily life" (*Travels* 234). This would involve an old cliché present in many of the traditional travel narratives: the other as an

object of observation, the Oriental depersonalized and placed under the scrutiny of the Westerner. Even though there is an implicit positional superiority, the author expresses his admiration for the Moroccans. Instead of feeling he has approached a stagnated civilization, as other travelers felt, there is a controversial identification with the other. For Bowles, the traveler or the visitor that can appreciate Tangier's beauty, "the chaos and absurdity" (*Travels* 230) of the place, is someone that can look at the city and its inhabitants with the child's eye. Quite controversially, in the previous "Letter from Tangier" (1954) he had argued that the city's charm "appeals particularly to those with a strong residue of infantilism in their character. There is an element of make-believe in the native life as seen from without (which is the only viewpoint from which we can ever see it, no matter how many years we may remain). It is a toy cosmos, whose costumed inhabitants are playing an eternal game of buying and selling… when you huddle or recline inside the miniature rooms of the homes you are immediately back in early childhood, playing house, an illusion which is not dispelled by the tiny tables and tea glasses, the gaudy cushions and the lack of other furniture" (*Travels* 96). I write controversial because not only the seer, but also the seen, are childish. This is a completely new approach to the picturesque: the traveler is self-defined as "spectator" (*Travels* 96), someone who does not get involved but, instead of being the "seeing man" from the exploration narratives, has the same attributes as the observed subject. On the one hand, native life is full of fantasy from the point of view of the outsider, who remains so regardless the time spent in the country. On the other hand, this "toy cosmos" brings us to a theatre play, where the natives and their way of life are something to look at, but not with the eyes of the colonizer, nor with the eyes of the explorer, but with the eyes of the child. Besides, not only the performers of such a play are childish (as many travelers pointed out) but also the spectator is a child who "refuses to grow up" (*Travels* 230); not any kind of traveler, but a person, like the author,

that has retained the full use of the imagination: "For imagination is essential for the enjoyment of a place like Tangier, where the details that meet the eye are not what they seem, but so many points of reference for a whole secret system of overlapping but wholly divergent worlds in the complex life of the city" (*Travels* 230). Port's thoughts in *The Sheltering Sky* convey the same idea in a passage that is a perfect example of the romanticization of the exotic. However, imagination remains fundamental in order to enjoy alterity. "The happiness, if there still was any, existed elsewhere: in sequestered rooms that looked on to bright alleys where the cats gnawed fish-heads; in shaded cafés hung with reed matting, where the hashish smoke mingled with the fumes of mint from the hot tea; down on the docks, out at the edge of the sebkha in the tents […] beyond the mountains in the great Sahara, in the endless regions that were all of Africa. But not here in this sad colonial room where each invocation of Europe was merely one more squalid touch, one more visible proof of isolation; the mother country seemed farthest in such a room" (*The Sheltering Sky* 57).

Thus, a person who refuses to grow up, who knows the powers of imagination, is someone entitled to see the complex artifact the city represents. André Breton defined imagination in the *First Surrealist Manifesto* (1924) as freedom of thought (Breton 4-5). This freedom enables the observer to enjoy the reality of a foreign place and the local to maintain their traditional way of living, at least according to Bowles.

The notion of toy cosmos and the Moroccans as players in a drama is also present in other writings and he considers it a unique quality of the country since his very first visit in 1931: in his autobiography, Bowles wrote that in Tetouan he was surrounded by the impression of "confusion and insanity," found people "excited and noisy" and ready to transform their verbal disputes into physical violence: "Each Moroccan gave the impression of playing a part in a huge drama; he was involved not only with the others on

the dispute, but also with the audience out front […] He would face his invisible public and subject it to formalized grimaces denoting exasperation, incredulity, indignation, and a whole gamut of subtler states of mind […] Even before getting to Tangier, I knew I should never tire of watching Moroccans play their part" (*Without Stopping* 126-127). Similarly, in another article dedicated to Tangier published as late as 1990, he repeated the same idea: "The dramas played by the Muslims in its labyrinthine passageways were like the inventions of an inspired playwright" (*Travels* 460).

In fact, throughout the years, in the different travel essays where he returned to the city of Tangier,[32] Bowles would not change his views on the city: he would delve deeper in the modernization and depersonalization of the external aspect of the city, as new, almost identical neighborhoods started to reshape the limits of Tangier, while at the same time maintaining that Tangier never had any monuments praiseworthy. As time went by, he would feel more and more surprised of the lure of the city. For someone who could only think about its degradation and who believed that not everyone else had the ability to apprehend the "mystery" of the daily life as he did, the only reason that justified the ever-growing attraction of Tangier was its mythical past as international zone where fortunes were made in a day, life was cheap and there was a general policy of *laissez faire*. He would also repeat that the interest of the town felt on the eccentric behavior of its inhabitants,[33] but Moroccans were not the objects of scrutiny, also the members of the international community that, although their ranks had been reduced since the fifties, still populated the town. This would add a new dimension to the perception of Tangier: the picturesque lies as much in the behavior of foreigners as much as in the Moroccans'. Bowles would be the insider, the translator of these lives, the spectator of their dramas.

[32] See "Tangier," published in 1963 in *Gentlemen's Quarterly*; "Tangier," published in *Independent on Sunday* in 1990 and "Views of Tangier," published as the prologue to Jellel Gastelli's photography book *Vues Choisies* in 1991.
[33] See "Tangier" (1963) and "Tangier" (1990) in *Travels: Collected Writings 1950-1993*, 365, 459.

2.5. The sublimation of the locus: the Sahara in Bowles's fiction and non-fiction

Throughout Paul Bowles's fiction and non-fiction, there are two focal points in the descriptions of the Maghreb: on the one hand, the town, mainly Tangier, but also Fez (*The Spider's House*), and Oran (*The Sheltering Sky*); on the other hand, there is the desert. The desert is very present in the Orientalist tradition in Morocco. In the course of the 19th century, the Sahara was disputed by Western powers. While Spain secured the region of the Saharan coast known as Rio de Oro with the endorsement of the European powers in 1884-1885, France and Britain competed for the control of the trans-Saharan routes for trade. Following a secret deal with the British in 1890, France finally gained control of the territories.[34] Before that, access to the desert was limited to those Westerners with the express authorization of the Sultan, usually colonial agents on diplomatic missions or explorers, such as James Richardson (1809-1851), who travelled to Morocco as a commissioner of the British Anti-Slavery Society in the mid-forties and wrote extensively on the subject in his *Travels in Morocco* (1860). Also Robert Bontine Cunninghame Graham (1852-1936) travelled through the Sahara and published his impressions in *Mogreb-el-Acksa: A Journey in Morocco* (1889). Decades later, Wyndham Lewis (1882-1957) would try to explore the Sous and Rio de Oro in his *Filibusters in Barbary* (1932). By then, traveling was easier but by no means comfortable. James Richardson was responsible for a detached, unsentimental approach to the desert, whereas Cunninghame Graham had a romanticized view of the landscape, and his is a sentimental account of an actual travel that accompanies an inner travel. Lewis' approach seeks to reverse such kind of romantic conventions and provides a "comic, unromantic and unattractive"[35] picture of Morocco, by means of the use of sarcasm and irony, defined by Lewis as "picturesque

[34] See Ghislaine Lydon, *On Trans-Saharan Trails: Islamic Law, Trade Networks, and Cross-Cultural Exchange in Nineteenth-Century Western Africa*. 36-37.
[35] Wyndham Lewis, "Introduction," in *Journey into Barbary*, xvi.

ridicule." Bowles views on the desert have more in common with Cunninghame Graham's romantic sentimentalism than with Lewis' mocking attitude, but he is, unwillingly or not, immersed in the same tradition and partakes of the same conventions.

Bowles's first contact with the desert took place in 1931 in Ouarzazate, that he reached by truck. In *Without Stopping* there are no traces of any rhetoric of discovery, neither an evident romanticization of the experience: "Ouarzazate came into view just before sunset; we saw the painted towers of the Casbah above the palms, and when the truck came to a stop, the silence was broken by the faint sound of a bugle" (*Without Stopping* 135). The trip seems delusory as the French officials sent Bowles and his friend Harry Dunham back to Marrakech. His first long stay in the Algerian Sahara (M'Zab, Ghardaïa, Laghouat) took place by the end of 1932. The description in his autobiography is quite unsentimental, explaining, without complaints, the difficulties and the discomfort to get there by bus, the cold in the little house he rented or his friendship with a Lieutenant d'Armagnac, his host. In 1932, while staying in Ghardaïa, he met George Turner, an American traveler who had been wandering around the desert for a few months, who became Tunner in *The Sheltering Sky.*[36] They spent some time together in Algiers and visited a local brothel. Together they hired a driver and two camels to escort them to the Great Eastern Erg to El Oued. It was a three-day trip stopping at *bordjes* at night. From El Oued, they traveled by truck to Nefta and finally emerged in Kairouan. He also complained to his mother that traveling in the desert was an expensive experience.[37] Bowles felt a strong connection with the Sahara and returned in numerous occasions. Most of *The Sheltering Sky* (1949) was written while the author was traveling around the desert in 1948, and the author declared: "it was a combination of memory writing and minute descriptions of whatever place I was in at the moment, all thrown together into the magma of the

[36] In Virginia Spencer Carr, *Paul Bowles, A Life*, 341.
[37] See *In Touch: The Letters of Paul Bowles*, 108.

memory when I finished it" (*Conversations* 109). In this sense, we can read Bowles's first novel under the lens of the travel account, as its descriptions were based on direct observation and committed to paper almost simultaneously. And we have the opportunity to read it under the lenses of the previous travel essays and find out if the conventions of the genre are followed or overcome by its author.

Before starting with Bowles's first novel, I would like to analyze a travel essay entirely devoted to the Sahara entitled "Baptism of Solitude" that was published in 1953 and then was included in *Their Heads Are Green and Their Hands Are Blue* (1962). In a way, "Baptism of Solitude" is a very conventional travel essay. It is a hybrid piece of writing, including ethnographic descriptions of the native population and reflections on slavery, geological descriptions of the different areas in the desert, fauna descriptions and practical advice on how to travel. All these explanations are written in the present tense, somehow impersonally, almost devoid of any "subjective" details: an example of the ethnographic present used by some travelers and ethnographers alike. But the main focus of the essay is the description of the desert landscape. The essay opens as follows: "Immediately when you arrive in the Sahara, for the first or the tenth time, you notice the stillness. An incredible, absolute silence prevails outside the towns; and within […] there is a hushed quality in the air. Then there is the sky […] solid and luminous, it is always the focal point of the landscape" (*Travels* 75). This is an example of what Mary Louise Pratt calls "monarch-of-all-I-survey scene," a common feature in the exploration narratives (Pratt 201). These scenes were usually promontory descriptions characterized by a heroic perspective, by a certain aestheticization and a certain density of meaning. In this case, this is a figurative promontory description; it has the effect of "arriving" to the Sahara and opening a metaphorical window that encompasses the country, the towns, the air, and the sky. We can argue that the relationship of mastery between the seer and the seen that

generally applies to these descriptions remains unclear in this paragraph: is the author really trying to apprehend the Sahara and its inhabitants? Perhaps not. Is he using a heroic perspective to catch the readers' attention? That is more likely. As a verbal painter, he is re-discovering the Sahara for his readers. Once he has presented the landscape to the reader, he almost literally steps into it: "you leave the gate of the fort or the town behind, pass the camels lying outside, go up into the dunes" (*Travels* 75). What for? To contemplate the desert and experiment *le baptême de la solitude*: "It is a unique sensation, and it has nothing to do with loneliness, for loneliness presupposes memory. Here, in this wholly mineral landscape lighted by stars like flares, even memory disappears; nothing is left but your own breathing and the sound of your heart beating. A strange, and by no means pleasant, process of reintegration begins inside you, and you have the choice of fighting against it, and insisting on remaining the person you have always been, or letting it take its course. For no one who has stayed in the Sahara for a while is quite the same as when he came" (*Travels* 75-76). Somehow, this paragraph is a kind of monarch-of-all-I-survey scene within the monarch-of-all-I-survey scene. The narrator invites the reader to become the seer. But far from being invited to explore the territory, the narrator asks the reader to enjoy the territory and to set out for an inner travel, departing from the blank memory, the clean slate that is the landscape, in order to become a different person. Thus there is a reversal of terms: the landscape, the subject of observation, has the power to apprehend and change the observer, not the other way round.

After explaining how uncomfortable the accommodation and facilities are in the Sahara, and giving some practical advice for the traveler (such as bring your own blankets, travel by truck any time you can, bring tinned goods, etc.), Bowles explains in the last paragraph the reason why everyone should go to the Sahara: "Why go? The answer is that when a man has been there and undergone the baptism of solitude he can't help himself.

Once he has been under the spell of the vast, luminous, silent country, no other place is quite strong enough for him, no other surroundings can provide the supremely satisfying sensation of existing in the midst of something that is absolute. He will go back, whatever the cost in comfort and money, for the absolute has no price" (*Travels* 90).

There is a similar idea present in Cunninghame Graham's *Mogreb-el-Acksa*. Both authors even employ the term "spell" to explain the effect of the territory upon man. For Cunninghame Graham. The desert is a "frontier territory" (141) in which man feels a certain "spell" that brings him back to nature. This kind of natural men, "civilized and uncivilized alike" (Cunninghame Graham 140), fall under the "spell" of the frontier. For both authors, the landscape is not a passive, inert element, but something that actively participates in the formation of the travelers' identity: a way of connecting with the absolute, with nature, a way of overcoming the self.

Moreover, the idea of mystery is not only shared by these two authors, it is a commonplace in the Oriental discourse whether applied to the desert (Cunninghame Graham), the cities (Urquhart, Thomson), to the beauty of the ruins (Wharton), or even the people (De Amicis). Bowles can share other commonplaces with previous writers, such as the identification of the Sahara with an *Arcadia felice*. "To stroll in a Saharan oasis is rather like taking a walk through a well-kept Eden" (*Travels* 82). At the same time, he can depart from other conventions like the idea of emptiness of the Sahara. In "Baptism of Solitude" he stressed that the desert was inhabited by different peoples –not only the Tuareg or the generally called "Berbers," frequently romanticized as desert-dwellers, but also black tribes—, and that the image of a vast expanse crossed by orderly caravans of Arabs from a white city to another was a "popular misconception" (*Travels* 80).

"Baptism of Solitude" is a quite orthodox piece of travel writing that presents a land that is not threatening, regardless the discomforts and the expenses, with a unique

attraction: a possible dissolution of the self within the absolute. Even though this attraction remains in Bowles's works of fiction set in the Sahara, the author adds a distinct element: the conflict with the other that leads to unexpected and violent consequences.

2.5.1. Themes and aesthetics in *The Sheltering Sky*: the sublimation of the nihilist dystopia

Bowles anticipated some of the themes in *The Sheltering Sky* in a letter to Peggy Glanville-Hicks written in January 1948. "The Sahara is not Algeria, is not Morocco, is not Senegal… it's a great stretch of earth where climate reigns supreme, and every gesture man makes is in conscious defense from, or propitiation of, the climatic condition" (*In Touch* 189). In fact, he is presupposing a permanent conflict with the place, a fight of man versus nature, absent in "Baptism of Solitude." In the same letter, he maintains that "Man is hated in the Sahara… one feels it in the sky, in the stones, in the air. It might as well be written in the stars." The absolute is bound to be threatening as well, a reminder of man's insignificance against nature.[38] At the same time, feeling this hatred proves to be extremely exciting, because "Where life is prohibited, it becomes a delectable forbidden fruit, and that is the feeling one gets here; each instant is begrudged one by an implacable tyrant" (*In Touch* 189).

When Bowles signed a contract for a novel with the publishing house Doubleday and accepted an advance in 1947, he had several elements in mind that would be the core of the novel: the book would take place in the Sahara, "where there was only the sky" (*Without Stopping* 275). Desert and sky would be the main characters in *The Sheltering Sky*, which took the title form a popular song from the beginning of the twentieth century

[38] For Mohamed Choukri, this idea is related to Bowles's skepticism towards life, a position embodied by Port in *The Sheltering Sky*: "Nihilism has taken root in him like the very marrow of his bones. Most of the characters in his novels and stories don't escape the deluge. Port, for example, in *The Sheltering Sky* wants to travel deep into the desert and not leave a trace behind him, since sandstorms can be relied on to cover one's tracks." *In Tangier*, 241.

called “Down Among the Sheltering Palms.” Bowles was determined to continue using the same method he had employed when writing his short stories: he would choose the characters, “spilled them out onto the North African scene” and see what happened, so the novel would “write itself” (*Without Stopping* 275).

In a certain way, Bowles wrote fiction of ideas. He used to put characters in a conflict situation against the human and natural environment, but in fact he was rewriting the same situation over and over. He revealed in an interview in 1971 that *The Sheltering Sky* and his short story “A Distant Episode” (1948) were twice-told tales, and the main characters were the same: “They’re all the professor,” he explains, referring to the linguist from “A Distant Episode” (*Conversations* 54). There is a holistic conception in the making of his narrative, which is also extended to the other protagonist of his first novel and the mentioned short story: the desert, which is one with the sky: “It’s all one: they’re both the same, part of nature” (*Conversations* 54). In a later interview (1975), he elaborated on the same idea: “The characters, the landscape, the climatic conditions, the human situation, the formal structure of the story or novel, all these elements are one. Since they are activated by other element of the synthetic cosmos, their own motivations are relatively unimportant” (*Conversations* 91). In this sense, the author is absolutely deterministic: characters are helpless pawns bound to lose themselves into this synthetic cosmos moved by the relentless force of the conflict against nature, their fellow human beings and themselves. It seems that they are lured into the unknown; they have departed their culture to step into a cosmos that unavoidably leads them to death or oblivion.

For Marilyn Adler Papayanis, this repetition of themes, characters, situations and structure is a tool for the “Western subject self-undoing” (Papayanis168). In the case of “A Distant Episode,” the self’s undoing is completely radical: an unnamed linguist professor that from being an expert on Arabic dialects is transformed into a mutilated dumb that ends

up forgetting every notion of any language.[39] In the section "The author as ethnologist" I will analyze at length this short story as a satire of the role of the expert whose knowledge proves to be useless when there is a clash with the other and the foreign environment.[40]

The Sheltering Sky is divided into three sections: the first is called "Tea in the Sahara," the second section is "The Earth's Sharp Edge" and the third is called "The Sky." "Tea in the Sahara" opens in a North African town that resembles Oran and introduces us to the main American characters: Port and Kit Moresby and their friend George Tunner. It tells the beginnings of their Saharan expedition and their parting at the oasis town of Aïn Krorfa, where Tunner joins Eric and Mrs. Lyle in their way to Messad while the couple pursues their trip further south to Bou Noura. At the beginning of the second section Port discovers his passport is missing, stolen by Eric Lyle. They continue their route but, by the time they reach El Ga'a, Port is very ill. They are banned from the town because of a meningitis epidemic and head for Sbâ by truck, where the French captain, Broussard, offers them shelter and identifies Port's illness as typhoid. Tunner tracks them in Sbâ and meets Kit and, in the meantime, Port dies alone. Then Kit leaves Sbâ without telling Tunner. In "The Sky," the shortest section, Kit wanders further and further into the desert where she is picked up by a caravan of camel drivers led by Belqassim and an older Tuareg. Both men rape her and Kit becomes increasingly attached to Belqassim. He disguises her as a boy and takes her back to his house where he hides her in a locked room. Soon his three wives found out and he takes Kit as the fourth. When Belqassim starts to lose sexual interest in her, Kit decides to escape. She bribes the wives with her jewelry and flees the house. Increasingly deranged, the local authorities take charge of her and send her to Oran but, before she can be repatriated to the United States, she loses herself in the middle of the city.

Succinctly, *The Sheltering Sky* can be considered a novel that develops an American

[39] See also Timothy Weiss, *Translating Orients: Between Ideology and Utopia*, 55-56.
[40] See pages 122-124.

relationship to the foreign. The characters are in constant movement, departing from the relatively familiar –the comforts of a Mediterranean town— to an increasingly unfamiliar, threatening and finally deadly and deranging place: the Sahara. And, even though the United States, their point of departure, does not appear as a location in the novel, there is a permanent opposition between the characters' background and their views on the Orient.

One of the most quoted statements of the novel is Port's reflection on the figure of the traveler. "He did not think of himself as a tourist; he was a traveler." Port is an experienced traveler and he does not feel limited by time as any tourist would. Travel and displacement go hand in hand: "Indeed, he would have found it difficult to tell, among the many places he had lived, precisely where it was he had felt most at home" (*The Sheltering Sky* 10). Then, "home" is not North America for Port; "home" is a cosmopolitan liminal space that is neither here nor there. He also adds another fundamental difference between tourist and traveler: "the former accepts his own civilization without question; not so the traveler, who compares it with the others, and rejects those elements he finds not to his liking. And the war was one facet of the mechanized age he wanted to forget" (11). That is, the traveler is somebody that cannot exist outside his civilization but has the ability to decide upon the elements he does not like; his can do and undo himself by freely choosing his destination. In the aftermath of the Second World War, many Western travelers, writers or otherwise, were eager to abandon the comforts of their homeland in pursuit of a less mechanized world that could provide for an alternative.[41] The element of escapism, together with the self-undoing, are two key elements in Bowles's idea of travel to the Orient.

Port and Kit react in different ways to the fact of leaving behind "all familiar

[41] Modernist writers had a dissimilar view in the aftermath of First World War. According to David Farley, intellectuals as Pound, Lewis or Cummings traveled "not to escape but to better understand and assess the complicated political and social landscape of the modern world, and they saw the travel book as an important genre for both this understanding and this assessment" (*Modernist Travel Writing* 3).

things." Whereas for Port the idea of going deeper into the Sahara "kept him in a state of pleasurable agitation" (109), Kit starts to see bad omens as they travel; for the nihilistic Bowles, the escapist travel always brings further horrors. In Aïn Krorfa, Kit starts to perceive signs of an incoming wreck: "The other omens indicated a horror more vast, and surely ineluctable. Each escape merely made it possible for her to advance into a region of heightened danger" (*The Sheltering Sky* 126). Always aware of a sense of doom, Kit knows that the escape always brings a payback, that escape is only an illusion. When Port tells him that living in warm countries is the same as being alive, she answers "I'm not sure I don't feel that it's wrong to try to escape the night and winter, and that if you do you'll have to pay for it somehow" (100). So escapism is at the same time a compulsion to run out from the familiar but also the device that puts into motion the mechanism that leads the characters to a radical self-undoing that ultimately ends up in death and madness.

For Bowles, travel represents an approach to the unconscious.[42] In *The Sheltering Sky*, the binary opposition consciousness/unconsciousness is deeply intertwined with the pairing space/displacement, a constant from the first paragraph of the novel to Kit's deranged scape after Port's death. In the beginning of the novel, consciousness is linked to awakening whereas unconsciousness is related to sleep: "He awoke, opened his eyes. The room meant very little to him; he was too deeply immersed in the non-being from which he had just come. If he had not the energy to ascertain his position in time and space, he also lacked the desire. He was somewhere, he had come back through vast regions from nowhere; there was the certitude of an infinite sadness at the core of his consciousness, but the sadness was reassuring, because it alone was familiar" (11). Dreams are the realm of the unconscious, related to the non-being, the no-where. Consciousness stands for being, time, place and, oddly, sadness. Familiar sadness. Port prefers to dwell in the unconscious

[42] In fact, he claimed that most of his narrative material came from the unconsciuos. See *Conversations with Paul Bowles,* 196.

non-being, to escape the familiar sadness through dream. And what was his dream about? A foreign place, a view from the window of his hotel room: "On the other side of the window there would be air, the roofs, the town, the sea. The evening wind would cool his face as he stood looking, and at that moment the dream would be there" (11). The dream-traveler does exactly what a modern traveler does: he opens a window and enacts a contemporary monarch-of-all-I-survey scene and takes possession of a territory that is reduced to the minimum: air, roofs, town, sea.[43]

The place is dreamed before being experienced, it becomes the repository of the desires to come yet. Not in vain, the travel to the Orient for Port is a travel that acquires erotic connotations. The rhetoric of discovery so present in former colonial discourses becomes related to sexual discovery. Throughout the novel, most of Port's intercultural intercourse derives from his sexual adventures and desires. Before starting their trip southward, Port follows Smaïl, a man he has met in the outskirts of the town, into a campsite under the promise of meeting a girl. In her tent, Port meets Marhnia and immediately desires her, even if they cannot communicate because they do not speak each other's language. To Port's annoyance, the girl insists in making tea before having sex, and asks Smaïl to tell Port the story of Outka, Mimouna and Aïcha and their tea in the Sahara, performing a reenactment of *The One Thousand and One Nights*, in which Marhnia acts as some Scheherazade that tells a story, in this case to postpone the sexual intercourse. The allusion to the *The One Thousand and One Night* is a commonplace of the Orientalist texts and it is almost always linked to the description of harems.[44] According to Edward Said, in

[43] In 1951 Bowles wrote to Peggy Glanville-Hicks that he felt that he seldom entered into contact with life, but that he was thinking it instead of actually living it. In this sense, he felt "a great desire to lose consciousness" but this was not really possible, no even in dreams: "Yet in sleep nothing is different; there is always the same cage around. One is conscious that one is dreaming, and that the same forces operate there as elsewhere" (*In Touch: The Letters of Paul Bowles*, 232).

[44] John Buffa describes the harem as a "terrestrial paradise" (*Travels* 310); Thomson felt utterly disappointed by the lack of beauty of the Moroccan women, suggesting that they look better behind their veils because they retain their picturesque essence so the Westerner can maintain the Oriental fantasy of the harem (*Travels in*

the Orientalist discourse there is a much repeated and clearly made association "between the Orient and the freedom of licentious sex" (*Orientalism* 190). By disappointing Port with her delay, Marhnia is also disappointing the Western readers, who surely expected a highly aestheticized description of the intercourse. However, the classical erotica of the harem, with its silks, golden embroideries and veils, falls short, as Marhnia's tent is full of objects such as dirty straw mats, pieces of stale bread, and sardine cans "scattered everywhere in utter disorder" (*The Sheltering Sky* 34).

This is the first time the Sahara is spoken of, within the story of the three. Thus, the first allusion to the Sahara is brought into the erotic/exotic space of Marhnia's tent,[45] as it is equally desired and exoticized. Eventually, Port's language becomes highly eroticized when talking to Kit about how he feels when he drinks and tries to connect with her and the subsequent difficulties: "I always imagine that somehow I'll be able to penetrate to the interior of somewhere. Usually I get just about to the suburbs and get lost" (167). This excerpt reminds us powerfully of Bowles's words the first time he saw the North African coast by boat: "Like any Romantic, I had always been vaguely certain that sometime during my life I should come into a magic place which in disclosing its secrets would give me wisdom and ecstasy—perhaps even death" (*Without Stopping* 125). The sexual overtones applied to landscape and places are recurrent in the narratives of exploration and other imperial narratives. For Budget Meakin, Morocco was a "virgin" land ready for colonial intervention (*Life in Morocco* 7). In MacLeod's report for the Geographic Society, the verb

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the Atlas 374, 383). Wharton is especially interested in the life in the harem: she devotes a whole section of *In Morocco* to "Harem and Ceremonies." She visited at least four, all of them belonging to rich households in Fez, Rabat, Marrakech, and also the Sultan's. She frequently connects harems to the richness and beauty of the *Arabian Nights*, opposing these characteristics to the women's lack of freedom. She receives with suspicion the declarations of their happiness behind the walls (*In Morocco* 162-206).

[45] Bouchra Benlemlih has associated these aesthetic overtones with storytelling and the representation of the exotica. "Inside the exotic space of the tent, Marhnia makes tea and handed them each a glass, then like Scheherazade in *The One Thousand and One Nights*, she recounts to Port a tale […] This folk story epitomizes the travel from inside to outside and reflects in miniature *The Sheltering Sky*'s overall plot. It also shows Bowles's sustaining interest in storytelling, an interest that culminates in the translation of Moroccan oral stories" (*Inhabiting the Exotic: Paul Bowles and Morocco*, 114-115).

"to penetrate" is frequently found ("The Achievements of France in Morocco" 85, 90) and Rio de Oro was a "closed book" ready to be "penetrated" according to Wyndham Lewis (*Filibusters in Barbary* xi). In any case, Port's attempts to penetrate and posses the landscape are futile. This time, looking from a hotel window in Bou Noura, he feels that the object of his desire is unreachable: "landscape was there, and more than ever he felt he could not reach it. […] He would have said that as he looked at them, the rocks and the sky ceased being themselves, that in the act of passing into his consciousness, they became impure" (*The Sheltering Sky* 167). The desert, that synthetic cosmos that includes the sky, the air, the rocks, cannot be consciously apprehended by the traveler, who has escaped his own civilization looking for an absolution, for a shelter, when there is no one.

We can conclude that this eroticization of the landscape is used as a device for its sublimation. Taking in mind that Bowles considered himself a Romantic, looking for "wisdom," "ecstasy," and even "death," we can assume that travel for him is also a quest for the sublime. I am using the term as used by the Romantics and then Jean-François Lyotard, as a combination of awe and terror. As Said points out, when Friedrich Schlegel stated in 1800: "It is in the Orient that we must search for the highest Romanticism," he meant "the Orient of the *Sakuntala,* the Zend-Avesta, and the Upanishads," not the contemporary Orient of 1800 (*Orientalism* 98). Lyotard's postmodern interpretation of the sublime aptly applies to Bowles's views as expressed by Port in *The Sheltering Sky*. For Lyotard the sublime is a feeling that accompanies the attempt to present the unrepresentable: "The admixture of fear and exaltation that constitutes sublime feeling is insoluble, irreducible to moral feeling" (Lyotard 127).[46] The sublime manifests the limits of thought and reveals the multiplicity and instability of the postmodern world. That "death" and "ecstasy" could be easily replaced for awe and fear. As for Port, the impossibility to

[46] See *Lessons on the Analytic of the Sublime*. Trans. Elizabeth Rottenberg. Standford: Stanford University Press, 1994.

approach the desert consciously is the insolvable consequence of attempting to approach the sublime.

So far, we have seen that travel to the Orient in *The Sheltering Sky* stands for escapism (from Western comforts, values and reality in the aftermath of the Second World War); as rite of passage; as self-undoing, in direct connection to our unconscious nature; as appropriation of the place; and as a search of the sublime. Indeed, Timothy Weiss has stated that Bowles's works "show a complex space of Orients with different aspects and significants" (Weiss 45). When asked why his characters were pushed beyond their limits, Bowles answered that it had to do with the "romantic fantasy of reaching a region of self-negation and thereby regaining a state of innocence" (*Conversations* 93). Thus, the Orient also becomes the nihilistic realm of innocence.

It is evident that travel is inherently associated to the place and that, depending on the site, the narrative acquires a different set of connotations. In the case of this novel, the Sahara has an overwhelming presence and the characters travel across the landscape and the desert towns. In fact, Bowles did not hesitate to declare that: "the desert is the protagonist" of the story, instead of the characters that, as we have seen, were recurrent models that appeared throughout his works (*Conversations* 54).

Traditionally, the desert is a *locus* that has inspired a particular kind of travel narratives with specific features. The subgenre of the desert narratives started in Arabia in the 1850s. C. M. Doughty, with his monumental *Travels in Arabia Deserta* (1888), is the milestone of this subgenre, where he hyperbolically defines the desert as: "a desolation of the land that is desolate" (1:490). These narratives commonly emphasized on the vastness, remoteness and emptiness of the sites and the landscape is frequently subject to prosopopoeia. Bowles declared in an interview that the desert, as part of nature, was indifferent: "Not caring. Unaware. And if you use the word God instead of nature, then I

think you get even closer to it" (*Conversations* 54). Johannes Willem Bertens in *The Fiction of Paul Bowles: The Soul is the Weariest Part of the Body* (1979) added a new dimension to the symbolic role the Sahara plays in *The Sheltering Sky*, providing a nihilistic framework: "It offers a physical parallel, in its bleak emptiness, to [the characters'] state of mind, and symbolizes, above all, the *nihil* itself" (56). Following this notion, Shoqairat and Simmons see the desert as a "stage" to explore the weaknesses of the Americans abroad (133). Classic Orientalists saw positive aspects in the primitivist values attached to the desert, such as authenticity, austerity, spirituality, nobility, freedom or purity. At the same time, they perceived it as a site to further develop their imperialist urges, the last realm yet to be conquered by Western mastery, whether symbolic or real.[47] More recent accounts may lack of these imperialist overtones but nonetheless they tend to use the desert as a critique of Western civilization and technique, maintaining the opposition primitive versus developed and considering that such an unspoiled environment brought out the natural man in every man.[48] Billie Melman has suggested that there is a trend among travelers-explorers in the Arabian desert starting in the beginning of the 19th century that came to imagine Arabia as a "land of utopian dreams and […] an asylum from an ailing and degenerate modern Western civilization" (Melman 113). For Port, the desert is a place yet to be polluted by Western warmongering and technique: "Everything's getting gray, and it'll be grayer. But some places'll withstand the malady longer than you think. You'll see, in the Sahara here..." (*The Sheltering Sky* 16). The Sahara, still unvisited,

[47] Said suggests that these classic Orientalist travelers were fundamental in fashioning opinions and attitudes towards the Orient: "In them Orientalism and an effective praxis for handling the Orient received their final European form, before the Empire disappeared and passed its legacy to other candidates for the role of dominant power" (*Orientalism* 224). In fact, most of the major explorers of the Arabian peninsula were affiliated to British political and military agencies. In any case, Melman explains that to dismiss their accounts solely as imperialist propaganda "would be to reduce the desert travel to an epiphenomenon of late colonial diplomacy" (*The Cambridge Companion to Travel Writing* 114). Carl Thomson defines this practice as a "self-aggrandising agenda" related to "fantasies of empowerment and social advancement" (*Travel Writing* 118).

[48] Cunninghame Graham, *Mogreb-el-Acksa* 140-141; Wilfred Thesigher, *Arabian Sands* 48-50, 310; Wyndham Lewis was not able to cross the Sahara but he romanticized the space all the same (*Filibusters into Barbary* xi).

becomes the object of Port's desires and his symbol for authenticity.

Usually desert travelers were expert travelers who mastered this "stage" even though they emphasize on the extreme conditions and hardships they encounter. These travelers are familiar with routes, language –and do not hesitate to include terms in Arabic— and they frequently "go Arab" in their customs and external appearance, as the renowned Orientalists T. E. Lawrence, Richard Burton, C. M. Doughty did. In the Moroccan context, Robert Bontine Cunninghame Graham disguise himself as an Arab while traveling in the region of the Anti-Atlas (*Moghreb al-Aksa*, 1898). In desert locations travelers were especially prone to introspection, inspired by the silence and isolation, and soon the travel acquires metaphysical connotations. As Shoqairat and Simmons argue in their comparative study of Wilfred Thesiguer's *Arabian Sands* (1959) and Bowles's *The Sheltering Sky*, explorer-writers in the desert depicted the place, the Arabs and their lifestyles as "an enabling space in which the Westerner could realize her/himself."[49] Said lists many similarities among these men and women: "great individuality, sympathy and intuitive identification with the Orient, a jealously preserved sense of personal mission in the Orient, cultivated eccentricity, a final disapproval of the Orient" (*Orientalism* 224). Syrine C. Hout has also explored the connection between Bowles's and Thesiger's novel and maintains that both works display a utopian potential in the description of the desert as a physical and narrative space.[50] Hout compares both novels as "narratives of discontent" that open to possibilities of "alternative modes of being in a locale radically different and geographically remote from the Western centers of corruption" in pursuit of a "purer and richer life" (Hout 114).

[49] "Anglo-American Identity and Romanticizing Arabia: Wilfred Thesiger's *Arabian Sands* and Paul Bowles's *The Sheltering Sky*." Wasfi Shoqairat and David Simmons. *American, British and Canadian Studies*. Vol. 15. No. 2 (2010), pp. 119-138. Siblu: Editura Universitattii Lucian Blaga din Siblu.

[50] "Grains of Utopia: The Desert as Literary Oasis in Paul Bowles's *The Sheltering Sky* and Wilfred Thesiger's *Arabian Sands*." Syrine C. Hout. *Utopian Studies* Vol. 11, No. 2 (2000), pp. 112-136. Pennsylvania: Penn State University Press.

The first time Port and Kit contemplate the Saharan landscape they react very differently to the experience. Whereas Port feels the experience would fulfill him completely, he knows his wife would never interpret the Sahara like him and that she would never understand the solitude and the infiniteness associated to the place: "such moments that he loved above all else in life; she knew that, and she also knew that he loved them more if she could be there to experience them with him. And although he was aware that the very silences and emptinesses that touched his soul terrified her, he could not bear to be reminded of that. It was as if always he held the fresh hope that she, too, would be touched in the same way as he by solitude and the proximity to infinite things" (*The Sheltering Sky* 100). For Billie Melman, classic travelers such as Thesiger and Lawrence usually "endow the desert with redemptive and purifying powers which 'cleanse' the suffering individual" (Melman 115). In Port's case, he is hoping for a double redemption: a possibility to connect with his wife in a spiritual level and a personal, existentialist atonement. Later on, Port contemplates the desert and literally feels that it has the power to absolve him, even though he is no worthy of its mercy. "The rocks and the sky were everywhere, ready to absolve him, but as always he carried the obstacle within him" (*The Sheltering Sky* 167).

Bearing in mind all the elements in the novel studied so far, the resemblances with some of the traveling accounts concerning the desert, and the fact that Bowles underlined the prominent role of the desert in the novel, we can consider *The Sheltering Sky* a desert narrative. Scholar Billie Melman has defined these narratives as "stories of the conquest of the void, or wilderness, as well as tales of risk which position the individual explorer in front of a hostile nature. They draw on the late Victorian penchant for barren and wild landscapes as well as on earlier Romantic concepts of the 'Great' in nature. The great in desert is sometimes associated with emptiness and stands for the infinity of the universe

and the human condition within it" (Melman 114). We have already studied the importance of the Romantic notion of sublime, understood as awe, wonder, astonishment and fear. The Great in nature is a synonym for sublimity, but also a specific aesthetic response to plains, mountains, deserts, and oceans.[51] In different authors, such responses are expressed in very similar terms, emphasizing on notions such as vastness, emptiness, infinity, grandeur, void or fear. Bowles initially shares the aesthetic sensibility of the Romantic and late Victorian travelers, following this "aesthetic of barrenness," as defined by Richard Bevis in *Road to Egdon Heath: The Aesthetics of the Great in Nature* (1999). For instance, the words "emptiness" and "empty" appear six times in direct association with the landscape. For Bevis, emptiness is the "terrestrial vision of cosmic void" and it often mirrors the mind and the spirit of the ones experiencing it (Bevis 356). When Kit looks from a bus window the "windswept emptiness," she imagines she is observing a "cube-shaped planet" to which they had been transported. "The light would be hard and unreal as it was here, the air would be of the same taut dryness, the contours of the landscape would lack the comforting terrestrial curves, just as they did all through this vast region. And the silence would be of the ultimate degree, leaving room only for the sound of the air as it moved past" (*The Sheltering Sky* 180). For her the Sahara is an extraterrestrial landscape, and she responds to that with a feeling of cosmic terror.

Similarly, the concept of "vastness" appears nine times in association with the desert. Then, it is not surprising that the Kit's fears throughout the novel acquire geographical connotations and are represented with a similar word-choice: "The other omens indicated a horror more vast, and surely ineluctable. Each escape merely made it possible for her to advance into a region of heightened danger" (*The Sheltering Sky* 126).

[51] As defined by Joseph Addison in his essays on "the pleasures of imagination," a major source for Edmund Burke's *A Philosophical Inquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (1756). Quoted in Bevis, *Road to Egdon Heath: The Aesthetics of the Great in Nature*, 5.

Later in the novel it becomes clear that inner fears precede actual danger. The escape Kit alludes is a dead-end, as there is no shelter, nowhere to go.

Curiously, there is only one direct allusion to "void" and it is not applied to landscape, but to Kit's consciousness. "But as she stood there, momentarily a part of the void she had created, little by little a doubt slipped into her mind, the sensation came to her, first faint, then sure, that some part of this landscape was moving even as she looked at it. She glanced up and grimaced. The whole, monstrous star-filled sky was turning sideways before her eyes. It looked still as death, yet it moved" (226). It seems that the inner void is a correlative of the void that surrounds Kit. Then the balance is broken by the irruption of the moving, "monstrous" sky that, once again, stirs up dread and evokes death.

Attached to such notions is the idea of silence, to which there are at least seven allusions in direct relationship with the landscape. Bearing in mind that Bowles was a composer before he became a writer, it is little surprising he chose to define the Sahara through silence, even though it is a classic attribute often used by desert travelers.[52] Once again, it is Kit the one that is more aware and scared of the stillness. The first time she realized the silence in the desert, she links it with the dehumanization of the landscape: "Even as she stood in the window she was struck with the silence of the place. She could have thought there was not a living being within a thousand miles. The famous silence of the Sahara" (*The Sheltering Sky* 202). Then such "objective" realization becomes more threatening as the events take a dramatic turn. For instance, it becomes linked to Kit's anguish before Port dies. Stepping into the terrace of the military fort in Sbâ, she exemplifies a monarch-of-all-I-survey scene: "to the north glimmered the white ereg, the vast ocean of sand with its frozen swirling crests, its unmoving silence" (226). It is not until

[52] According to Bevis, quiet was one of the Great's most popular attributes in the 19th century. Romantic poets celebrated Alpine stillness and European travelers in the desert commented frequently on it (*Road to Egdon Heath: The Aesthetics of the Great in Nature* 368).

she starts hearing a humming sound coming from the town below that then she recognizes as belonging to the motor of a vehicle that the threat associated to that "unmoving silence" disappears and "the world moved back into the realm of the possible" (229). In the meantime, Port fights for his life, and he too is terrified by silence: "It was in the silence of the room that he now located all those hostile forces" (*The Sheltering Sky* 227), he thinks in his deathbed, conjuring all the dangers in one concept.

And in which terms is expressed the extended metaphor that gives the novel its title, the sky? Throughout the novel the narrator emphasizes on its physicality, as it were a solid presence. The lexicon associated to the sky is intrinsically tangible: it is defined as "palpably lighter" (41); "hanging" over their heads (43); as something "with holes of deep blue" (69) and, of course, as a "solid thing up there" (101), even "a metal dome" (275). This is the key to the novel; the sky offers protection "from what's behind," at the same time hiding the *nihil* itself: "Kit shuddered slightly as she said: 'From what's behind?' 'Yes.' 'But what is behind?' Her voice was very small. 'Nothing, I suppose. Just darkness. Absolute night'" (101). As the novel progresses, the adjectivization that applies to the sky also becomes increasingly dramatic: at the beginning is "frowning" (68) and "blinding" (75), then "threatening" (78), "hard" (103) and "intense" (160), to become, in the third and last section, aptly entitled "The Sky," "monstrous" (226), "burning" (271, 282), "pitiless" (282), and "violent" (*The Sheltering Sky* 312).

At first, Port does not share Kit's sense of doom; he wants to be a part of the synthetic cosmos of the desert: "I feel that this town, this river, this sky, all belong to me as much as to them" (120). Afterwards, this utopian wish becomes darker as he senses the ultimate existentialist horror that lies behind the sky. In Bou Noura he is assaulted by nihilistic feelings and he is not able to look directly at the sky, that could remind him of his lack of importance and the lack of any final truths: "It takes energy to invest life with

meaning, and at present this energy was lacking. He knew how things could stand bare, their essence having retreated on all sides to beyond the horizon, as if impelled by a sinister centrifugal force. He did not want to face the intense sky, too blue to be real, above his head" (159-160). Soon, the cosmic utopia symbolized by the sky turns into a foreseen dystopia, "expecting to hear the sky crack" (172). The crack in the sky is a metaphor of the crack of the self, the last image on Port's mind before he dies. His last apparition on the novel recalls the opening of the book –"He awoke, opened his eyes" (11)—. In this grotesque mirror image, Port "opened his eyes, shut his eyes, saw only the thin sky stretched across to protect him. Slowly the split would occur, the sky draw back, and he would see what he never had doubted lay behind advance upon him with the speed of a million winds" (232). His death is almost an existentialist relief; Port would finally manage to join the nothingness and dissolve into oblivion: "Reach out, pierce the fine fabric of the sheltering sky, take repose" (*The Sheltering Sky* 235).

How does Kit react when the omens she has been feeling finally come true? On the one hand, Kit's deranged escape into the desert becomes a dark reversal of the utopian fusion with the landscape that Port had wished. On the other, and in another example of the self's undoing, she enters a liminal space in which surroundings and words start to lose meaning, and once that point is reached, "there is no longer any turning back" (266). When Kit is raped by Belqassim, the act of violence triggers a process similar to the Professor's in the short story "A Distant Episode" (1948). With the loss of understanding, she becomes an empty self and starts a process of grotesque reeducation. "She was alone in a vast and unrecognizable world, but alone only for a moment; then she understood that this friendly carnal presence was there with her" (272). Thus, Kit prefers Belqassim's sexual abuses to the unbearable horror linked to the vastness and stillness of the desert and hidden by the sky. At least the carnal presence is human.

In desert narratives the figure of co-traveler frequently appears and the accounts take the form of a dialogue.[53] According to Billie Melman, Arabian travelers established a brotherly bond with these natives, as "male travelers celebrate a physical prowess and admire the Bedouin for his manliness" (117). Occasionally such a bond acquires a homoerotic streak. In a certain way, the relationship between Kit and Belqassim is a reversal of such bond. As a woman, she cannot aspire to establish a brotherly bond, but she feels a sexual attachment with the Tuareg that is one of the last remnants of her humanity. Through this violent, erotic sublimation, the other becomes the anti-companionship in the desert narratives.

Before taking a plane back to civilization she has the last and most nightmarish sight of the sky: "Someone once had said to her that the sky hides the night behind it, shelters the person beneath from the horror that lies above. Unblinking, she fixed the solid emptiness, and the anguish began to move in her. At any moment the rip can occur, the edges fly back, and the giant maw will be revealed" (312).

In a certain way, *The Sheltering Sky* can be considered an anti-desert narrative: the travelers do not conquer the void and the wilderness, even though they are confronted against a hostile nature, they become defeated by the landscape. In the preface to the 1998 edition of *The Sheltering Sky*, Bowles defined the Sahara as a representation of alterity, as "the enemy outside" (5). In the same way that there is not a single Orient in Bowles's fiction, there is not a single Sahara either. The desert becomes a double symbol: an unspoiled place and an immediate threat, an "enemy." The threat is not a mere embellishment of the text, a "risk" to thrill the coach travelers with the tales of the exotic dangers in such remote parts. At the same time, Bowles uses the same semantic devices

[53] In the case of travel writers in Morocco, a perfect example is *Moghreb al-Acksa* by Robert B. Cunninghame Graham, which is dedicated to his one of his travel companions, Haj Mohammed Es Swani El Bahri, despite he would never read it, but "because we have travelled much together and far" (*Moghreb-el-Acksa* vii).

classic Orientalists and Romantic writers employed when describing the Great in desert, heightening the horror in nature in order to express and stress an existentialist anguish. If the previous travelers experienced the sublime as awe, Bowles goes a step further and defines it as horror; where there is grandiosity there is also threat. Alterity is represented in terms of antagonism, as the desert is perceived as the "enemy outside," an "exile from the world" (178). At the same time, this "frontier territory" to which Cunninghame Graham alluded is a liminal space where time ceases to exist, connected to the subject's unconscious. Instead of providing comfort to the readership, as in the case of the travel narratives in which the protagonist escapes the dangers unscathed, he offers uncertainty, dread, despair. This is Bowles's originality and that is why *The Sheltering Sky* becomes an anti-desert narrative.

3. THE AUTHOR AS ETHNOLOGIST

3.1. Orientalism vs. Anthropology

At first sight, it seems easy to connect Orientalism and anthropology. On the one hand, both disciplines aimed to know and to describe places and peoples outside "civilization." They both created holistic discourses in which the Other was juxtaposed against the Same, on the grounds of a series of binary oppositions that paved the way for stereotypes and discrimination. On the other, both disciplines helped the colonial machinery with their extended knowledge of "primitive" peoples and foreign lands. Postcolonial anthropologists like Talal Asad and Mwenda Ntarangwi, Mustafa Babiker and David Mills have explored the interconnection between Orientalism and anthropology. In *African Anthropologies* (2006) the latter explain that since the 19th century the approach and study of world cultures was a "Western division of intellectual labour" (16). The world was divided into areas with a long-standing written culture (the realm of the Orientalists) and areas without a written culture which were considered "backward" (the realm of the anthropologists). For his part, in *Anthropologies and the Colonial Encounter* (1983), Asad maintained that both Orientalism and functional anthropology developed similar strategies to represent non-Western peoples. According to the author, since the 16th century these disciplines are rooted in the complex historical encounter between the West and the Third World that would eventually reveal strong contradictions, which articulated this "unequal" encounter (Asad 103-104). Asad points out that "the European historical experience of subordinate non-European peoples has shaped its objectification of the latter" (Asad 104). By focusing on a particular image of the Islamic and the African traditions—the political rule—both constructs helped to justify colonial intervention.

In *The Invention of Africa* (1988), postcolonial critic V.Y. Mudimbe argues that the role of travelers as "amateur anthropologists" shaped anthropology in Africa. For Mudimbe, these travelers and explorers invented the concept of a "static and prehistoric tradition" (189) together with some "coach anthropologists" like Lucien Lévy-Bruhl (1857-1939). Ntarangwi, Babiker and Mills also state that starting in the pre-colonial and early colonial period, not only travelers, but also administrators and missionaries "established the vision of Africa for the world, creating biblical, racist colonialist and bio-ethnological frameworks that have continued to shape the way the West perceives and deals with Africa" (*African Anthropologies* 9). We have already seen how the accounts of the travelers in Morocco include ethnological description and political reports. Their discourse tends to be uniform and static, like the discourse on Africa, but instead of focusing on the "prehistoric tradition," they usually developed an idea of Morocco as a land in which time had come to a stop; a place which represented the childhood of the earth and where the technological advances typical of civilization were already yet unknown.

Among others, Talal Asad does not completely discard the work carried out by early anthropologists on the grounds of their contribution to maintaining the structures of power erected by the colonial system. One cannot forget the anthropologists' role as recorders of a native heritage that would otherwise be lost (Asad 17).

In general terms, whereas Orientalism was focused on portraying foreign cultures, emphasizing the exotic, the different, and the curious, anthropology studied "prehistoric" peoples, recording their native heritage, oral literature, and indigenous forms of life. The language of the former is mainly literary, while the latter tends to be scientific. Even though their audiences could be similar, the Orientalist reader used to be an untrained lover of travel literature. In the case of anthropology, its audience was mainly composed by

students and professionals. Their methods differed widely: Orientalist writings are based on random research; very often, writers did not need to visit the places they were dealing with, and by doing so, they were creating a self-referential discipline. On the other hand, anthropology was based on direct, scientific research, collected through long-time periods; anthropologists frequently knew the local language and usually mistrusted foreign informants, something Orientalists did not take into account. In general terms, Orientalism in Morocco was a random-like collection of first impressions, traditions, gossip, and stereotypes, whereas anthropology was concerned with the systematic collection of evidence from the fieldwork. The effect created by the former was a certain dramatization, while the latter was an intended objectivism. We cannot forget that both discourses frequently led to generalization—anthropology, by using the ethnographical present and misunderstanding the role of history in the development of non-Western peoples—whose sole purpose was to objectify their knowledge (Asad 17). We have already seen how Bowles fulfills the role of Orientalist in some aspects, but he is also close to the "amateur anthropologists" to which Mudimbe referred. In fact, Mudimbe defines anthropology as the study "of the distance between the Same and the Other" (*The Invention of Africa* 81), and Bowles devoted his whole career to explore, analyze and fantasize about such distance.

3.1.1. Anthropologists in Morocco: from the ethnological atlas to the cultural translation

Until the 1950s, anthropology did not become an academic discipline with methods comparable to other sciences. Even as a modern science, anthropology was rooted in a tradition derived from the work of naturalists, missionaries, and travelers as well as ethnographers.[54] The expansion of ethnology had coincided with the height of imperial

[54] See Joan Pau Rubiés, "Travel Writing and Ethnography," 251.

activity, becoming part of "a process of expansion which saw also the creation of a Western identity centred on the idea of modernity" (Rubiés 258). This process reached a turning point in the interwar years with the split between the professional anthropologist and the literary late-romantic or post-romantic travel writer.

In Morocco, the most prominent ethnographic authority in the first decades of the twentieth century is Edward A. Westermarck (1862-1939), a Finnish philosopher and sociologist based in the United Kingdom. His work on Morocco, the monumental *Ritual and Belief in Morocco* (1926) reads like a catalogue of myths, rituals and customs of the country. In the late 1960s his work was reprinted in the United States, and the responsible for writing the foreword was Bronislaw Malinowski, one of the most important anthropologists of the 20th century who had frequently reacted against the coach ethnographers of the 19th century.[55] It is striking to see how his introduction is not about "scientific" anthropology, but rather an introduction to a travel account, with all the usual elements of this kind of narrative: danger, exoticism, literary references, entertainment and melancholy. For instance, Malinowski portrays Westermarck as a scholar-adventurer who studied for years the "savage or barbarous tribes of the Maghrib […] braving dangers so real that at times he had to be declared outside consular responsibility" (Westermarck i). For a short foreword, it is surprising that there are three allusions to one of the most extended stereotypes of Orientalism: the *Arabian Nights.* For Malinowski, the two volumes are an inexhaustible source of "information and delight" (iv), defining the book with the same attributes present in travel writing, to be found even in the tone of loss and melancholia. Malinowski argues that, even if the myths and beliefs will soon die in the minds of the people who created them, the "freshness and imaginative power, with the flavour of the wonderful and miraculous which prove that the Thousand and One Nights

[55] See Bronislaw Malinowski, *Argonauts of the Western Pacific*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1922.

are not yet at an end, unless they be extinguished by the cold light of civilisation" (ii).

In the very introduction of his account, Westermarck acknowledges his mistrust for the foreign residents' opinions, because they lack "accuracy." His is an objective account, proper of a serious enterprise: "My chief object is to give a systematic account of what I have myself seen or heard from the lips of natives" (8). That would be a direct record, or a cultural translation, based on fieldwork. In any case, many travelers in Morocco had also employed the notion of giving a direct account in order to provide an accuracy that the very genre also demanded. In other aspects, Westermarck's is an "objective" account where the author's self is mostly absent. The book acquires the form of an atlas, a long list of rituals and beliefs presented in alphabetical order, in which the actual intercourse with the other does not appear, the author becoming the hidden but maximum authority. In terms of contents, one of the most important aspects in his work from our point of view is the connection the author draws between magic and religion. For Westermarck, the relationship between magic and religion is based on mystery, "which is found in both" (24). Thus, mystery becomes the belief on the supernatural.[56]

Besides the obvious differences between a professional ethnographer and an expatriate writer, what did Westermarck and Bowles have in common? They both draw their ethnographic knowledge from direct observation, and they both used such knowledge to create a cultural translation of Morocco for Western audiences. In the case of Paul Bowles, the most obvious cultural translations were a philological exercise, his translations of oral stories by Moroccan storytellers and writers. Besides, Bowles also links magic and mystery to the place, even though his observations corresponded to a post-romantic traveler instead of a scholar.

[56] This view is not shared by Émile Durkheim, who thinks the connection relates to the realm of *le sacré*, a unified system of beliefs and practices, and neither by Henri Hubert and Marcel Mauss, for whom religion is social whereas magic is antisocial or non-social.

The late 1960s and 1970s were two fertile decades for anthropology studies in Morocco. A certain number of anthropological theories were applied to the Moroccan context, trying to offer new paradigms for a society that had recently eluded colonial powers, especially in American studies. They put the country in the center of the anthropological debate from different perspectives: the nature of fieldwork (Rabinow), ethnographic writing (Crapanzano), and Islam (Eickelman, Geertz or Gellner). Brian T. Edwards has pointed out that such anthropologic interest takes place at the same time that Morocco was becoming a hippie destination mostly for young Americans (*Morocco Bound* 290). According to Mohammed Masbah,[57] while those studies claimed to establish a rupture from colonial theories, as they were independent from colonial devices and had happened later on time, such rupture was incomplete, as it lingered on late 19th century European sociology concepts, maintaining, to a certain extent, "a supremacist gaze towards other communities" (Masbah 261).

John R. Maier, who has compared Bowles's work as a translator with the role of American anthropologists in Morocco in the 1960s and 1970s, had a more optimistic view: "American anthropologists […] have come, like their counterparts in literary studies, to question the fundamental assumptions of their profession. [From their own positionings] they have found ways to have Moroccans speak: for Geertz, through symbols like stories told of 17th century Sufi saints; for Rabinow, through the hermeneutics of fieldwork; and for Crapanzano, through the stories and esoteric lore of a Meknes tile-maker who is convinced he is married to the seductive she-demon 'A'isha Qandisha. All entered Morocco and found ways to have Moroccans speak to them."[58]

[57] Mohammed Masbah, "Anglo-Saxon anthropology in Morocco: evaluating Gellner's segmentary theory."

[58] Maier, John R. "Two Moroccan Storytellers in Paul Bowles's *Five Eyes*: Larbi Layachi and Ahmed Yacoubi." *Postmodern Culture*. Vol. 1.3 (May 1991).

Edward Said believed anthropology was an inaccurate "great narrative," using Jean-François Lyotard's concept. Traditionally, anthropology had played an important role in the "study and representation of the 'primitive' or less-developed non-Western societies by Western colonialism," even manipulating native societies for imperial purposes ("Representing the Colonized" 295). With the end of colonial rule, anthropology needed to acquire a new role, as the postcolonial field became a challenging territory in which colonial assumptions did no longer apply.

Even though since then new trends appeared, such as Marxist or anti-imperialist anthropology and postmodern anthropology, influenced by literary theory and theoreticians of writing, discourse, and power, the representation of the Other remained a thorny issue, a problem of authority and a postcolonial landmark: on whose authority can a scholar represent the Other? For Said, the very notion of native interlocutor has always been controversial and ambivalent: on the one hand, the *interlocuteur valable* was a remnant of colonialism, a representation who pushes the native to fit in the categories formulated by the colonial authority; on the other hand, the notion recalls of "the calm as well as the antiseptic, controlled quality of a thought-experiment" ("Representing the Colonized" 298).

However, Said openly criticized one of the most "ominous trends" that prevailed within postcolonial anthropology: the fetishization and celebration of otherness and difference, suggested by the "heedless appropriation and translation of the world by a process that for all its protestations of relativism, its displays of epistemological care and technical expertise, cannot easily be distinguished from the process of empire" (303). Said was directly referring to the absence of any reference to the changes brought by American imperialism within postcolonial anthropology.

It is not my intention to draw a list of American anthropologists and their main

findings in the Maghrib. However, I have chosen some of them to illustrate how their interests did not differ in some aspects to Bowles's.

One of the leading figures in anthropological studies in Morocco was Clifford Geertz (1926-2006), one of the most important exponents of cultural anthropology. Geertz believed in the "translation of cultures" which required of an interpretative method. For Geertz, cultural symbols had to be read by the anthropologist as documents in a foreign language. This is quite a radical approach to anthropology: "The concept of culture I espouse […] is essentially a semiotic one. Believing, with Max Weber, that man is an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun, I take culture to be those webs, and the analysis of it to be therefore not an experimental science in search of law but an interpretive one in search of meaning" (*Interpretation of Cultures 5*).

According to Geertz, anthropology traditionally tended to divide the history of different peoples into periods called "primitive," "archaic," "medieval," or "modern." Modernization is understood in terms of borrowing from the West, and change is "consequently measured by the degree to which values, ideas, and institutions which were, supposedly perfect in the West… have diffused to the society in question and taken root there" (*Islam Observed* 58). This model ("world-acculturation"), which Geertz refuses in his own studies, assumes that the development of the so-called "backward" societies consists of their approximation to the present condition of Western society.

Geertz does not fit in Said's accusation and he does mention and study the effects of colonial occupation in foreign cultures. In *Islam Observed: Religious Development in Morocco and Indonesia* (1971), Geertz established that there was a reactive movement after colonialism that changed culture in Morocco: "colonialism created the conditions in which an oppositional, identity-preserving, willed Islam could and did flourish" (*Islam*

Observed 65). But, as Geertz noticed, such turn was a scripturalist, normative one, to the Koran, the Hadith, and the Sharia. The author established that Western intervention had directly provoked a reaction, not only against Christianity, but against the classical religious traditions of Morocco, such as popular religious manifestations.

Without being a professional anthropologist, Paul Bowles had reached the same conclusion two decades before Geertz wrote his monograph. He had even foreseen this turn of events before Morocco became independent in 1956. As early as 1950, he had written that the ritual practices performed by the religious brotherhoods such as the Gnaoua (*ginawa*) and Aïssaoua (*aisawiyya*) were being threatened by the "orthodox Moslem population," pointing at nationalism (*Travels* 46). In "No More Djinns" (1951), he complained that the local nationalists were trying to suppress "by law and propaganda" the indigenous cultural manifestations in the country, Berbers' mostly. In "Africa Minor" (1959), written soon after Morocco became independent, he reflected: "The total indifference to cultural heritage appears to be a necessary adjunct to he early stages of nationalism" (*Travels* 265). Without being a supporter of the French rulers at all, Bowles incessantly denounced the orthodoxy of nationalism and its campaign for eradicating heterodox cultural and religious manifestations. *The Spider's House* (1955) is indeed an excellent example of the clash between nationalist orthodoxy and traditional heterodoxy.

In *Islam Observed*, Geertz coincides with Bowles in their views of nationalism. He explains that nationalism would turn for its spiritual roots "back toward the more established patterns of belief" (107). He argues that the key to such unusual alliance was the figure of the Sultan, who had always been the religious head of the country (*imam*), and who the French colonial authorities had made the political head of the country, whereas in practice he was a puppet ruler. Geertz establishes that "there is probably no other liberated

colony in which the struggle for independence is so centered around the capture, revival, and renovation of a traditional institution" (78).

In any case, no anthropologist could deny that cultures are subject to change. Early anthropologists would oppose primitivism to modernity, but this view started to change in the sixties. In 1975, the cultural anthropologist Paul Rabinow (1944-) would publish *Symbolic Domination: Cultural Form and Historical Change in Morocco*. Rabinow's main contribution is a new definition of tradition as a "moving image of the past," arguing that tradition is not opposed to modernity, but to alienation, that takes place when a culture attempts to maintain a "fixed set of symbols once other conditions have shifted" (Rabinow 1). Rabinow believes that when we approach traditional cultures, we can know ourselves better. Moroccan culture was very much alive even after independence, providing a "meaningful framework for interpreting the world" (2). This does not mean that we should go native, reenacting a "Rousseauesque fantasy," as Paul Bowles would define it. Rabinow's approach is deeply humanistic, establishing that the aim of anthropology is no other than "the comprehension of others to return, changed, to ourselves" (100). In Bowles's fiction, as we have seen in the previous section, the encounter with the Other triggers a return to the self that becomes a radical transformation, a self's undoing. Besides, this idea may be linked to the expatriate's dilemma: living in another culture changes yourself but makes you a "foreigner" in your own land.

Rabinow's career revolves around the problem of modernity, a problem that opposes those seeking to embrace or resist modern projects of power / knowledge. While working in Morocco, Rabinow was able to witness the clash between imperialism and tradition. For him, imperialism had imposed the problem of tradition versus alienation in a violent form. In fact, the impact of colonial intervention and expansion provoked deep and

drastic changes in culture, such changes that "even social, economic, and cultural structures must be defined in terms of a reaction to colonial expansion." Furthermore, he observed that dislocation and domination processes were less severe in Morocco than they have been in Algeria, so Moroccans did not have to choose between "complete assimilation of French culture or a defensive and embattled Islam" (Rabinow 2).

In *The Spider's House*, change is a key element. Bowles explains in the prologue that he aimed at writing a novel that portrayed the traditional daily life in Fez, "because it was a medieval city functioning in the twentieth century," an idea he repeated throughout several travel essays. But, when he started writing the novel in 1954, the uprisings against French rule became more frequent, culminating in the Moroccan independence two years after. *The Spider's House* exposes the problem of modernity and imperialism, the clash between alienation and tradition. But, as Bowles sees it, the impact of colonial rule has provoked an unwonted result: "I had been waiting to see the end of French rule in Morocco. Ingenuously I had imagined that after the Independence the old manner of life would be resumed and the country would return to being more or less what it had been before the French presence" (ix). On the contrary, Bowles saw that nationalists were keener to adopt European ways than to maintain the traditional ones. Tradition had become a "moving image of the past," and Moroccans had sought, for better or worse –from Bowles's point of view, definitely worse— to overcome alienation. Rabinow had a less pessimistic view of Morocco, although he devoted his book to rural areas instead of big cities such as Fez. Colonial rule had left its stamp but traditional culture was alive and had evolved in some ways. However, central symbols, the key elements in culture, remained, due in part to their inherent ambiguity, which made them implicitly susceptible to many interpretations.

As Geertz and Rabinow, Dale F. Eickelman (1942-) is also interested in exploring the mechanisms of power in the creation of social forms. In *Moroccan Islam: Tradition and Society in a Pilgrimage Center* (1976), Eickelman explored at large the figure of the saint or *marabout*, and analyzed social order and social structures in Morocco, urban and rural alike. For Eickelman, traditional Moroccan Islam is eminently based on maraboutism; a *marabout* (*murābiṭ*) is described by Eickelman as a person, living or dead "to whom is attributed a special relation toward God which make them particularly well placed to serve as intermediaries with the supernatural and to communicate God's grace (*baraka*) to their clients" (6). For Eickelman, *marabouts* used to play key roles in religion, politics and economy in North African society, particularly in Morocco. Until the 19th century, it was the prevailing form of Islam both in the rural and the urban areas. French (colonial) Orientalism in Morocco had explored the figure of the *marabouts*, but they had frequently overlooked their impact on Moroccan society, deeming maraboutism as a form of vulgar mysticism and fatalistic resignation to the world, stripped of the more rigorous aspect of the Islamic tradition, a view followed by Moroccan nationalists with their scripturalist, more orthodox Islam. For Eickelman, this position was a form of control exerted through knowledge; in the case of the French, they would become anxious about the formation of a pan-Islamic movement that spread across borders in North Africa through the links between religious orders (29).

3.2. Bowles and anthropology

In general terms, Bowles's ethnographic interest borders on the modernist penchant for primitive cultures. In *Gone Primitive: Savage Intellects, Modern Lives*, Marianna Torgovnick suggests that the primitive is the most salient feature of the Other, the Not I (Torgovnick 8). She explores the interest of the primitive within modernist tradition, enhanced and romanticized by anthropologists like Malinowski.

Sebastian Skeaping has argued that young Bowles had been in contact with many actors of the avant-garde in Paris that found in the primitive cultures an immediate source of inspiration, such as the musical compositions by Igor Stravinsky, the cubist paintings by Picasso through Gertrude Stein or the exhibitions of African artifacts by Tristan Tzara, besides the general interest of the Surrealist movement in primitivism. T. S. Eliot, very admired by Bowles, proved to be a cornerstone for ideas of the primitive and anthropology. He explained in his 1918 review of *Tarr* by Wyndham Lewis in *The Egoist*: "The artist, I believe, is more *primitive*, as well as more civilized, that his contemporaries, his experience is deeper than civilization" (Eliot 106). This breeding ground of influences became objectified in the author's collaborations with the magazine *View*, where he published his first articles, translations and works of fiction. According to the biographer Virginia Spencer Carr, Bowles was convinced that without the influence of the surrealist writers and painters that took flight from Paris to New York as a result of the Second World War in the American avant-garde, the magazine would have been "a far less interesting publication" (*Paul Bowles, a Life* 168). In 1945, Bowles demonstrated his ethnographic interest by publishing some photographs he had taken in Central and South America in a section called "A Scrapbook of Tropical Americana." In another number the same year, he would translate two primitive myths from the French, Bluet d'Achères' "The Visions of the Comte de Permission" and Jean Ferry's "She Woke Me Up So I Killed Her." These experiences triggered his interest to write and publish his own stories, that readily took the form of myths, such as "The Scorpion," published in *View* in December 1945, and "By the Water," for the October 1946 issue. Biographer Millicent Dillon indicates that Bowles has read the work of Claude Lévi-Strauss in preparation for these stories (*You Are Not I* 173).

But Paul Bowles's interest in the primitive also approaches a postmodern sensibility. John R. Maier has seen an evident postmodern turn in Bowles's works of

fiction, even though his style remained straightforwardly realistic.[59] This becomes especially manifest by the mid-1960s, with his translations of oral tales, those "strange bicultural hybrids" in which Bowles "provided English-speaking readers with stories that challenge their ability to translate a culture very different from their own" (Maier). This would show a change of mentality, from "primitive" vs. "civilized" society, to "traditional" vs. "modern."

Paul Bowles's position toward expatriation and travel also influenced his interest in foreign peoples. One of the main differences between a traveler and a classic ethnographer was one of time, similarly to the one Port saw between traveler and tourist in *The Sheltering Sky*.[60] As we have seen in the section "The author as traveler," his early fiction partially originates from the experience of his travels in North Africa in the 1930s. Bowles took residence in Tangier in 1947 and spent almost the rest of his life in Morocco, more than fifty years, becoming a permanent expatriate. Apart from the travel essays, would be still valid to read his later works under the lens of travel writing theory? If we take into account James Clifford's definition of the anthropologist's field, "defined as a site of displaced dwelling and productive work,"[61] we could see a similar approach in Bowles's case, a displaced Westerner that worked abroad most of his life and found inspiration in the culture that surrounded him. Year after year, Bowles started to accumulate cultural knowledge of Morocco and North Africa, in terms of language, tradition, ritual, and further interaction with its native population. All these, according to Clifford, are the bases of a "participant observation," a kind of "hermeneutic freedom" that gives the traveler/anthropologist the possibility to move in and out social situations.

[59] See John R. Maier, "Two Moroccan Storytellers in Paul Bowles's *Five Eyes*: Larbi Layachi and Ahmed Yacoubi." *Postmodern Culture*. Vol. 1, n. 3 (May 1991). Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
[60] See Chapter 2.5.1, page 61.
[61] See James Clifford, *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century*, 21.

Thanks to this knowledge, Bowles was considered an expert, and as such was frequently asked to write forewords and introductions for other authors, especially towards the end of his life.[62] Such knowledge also enabled him to translate twenty novels and essays and more than twenty short stories written or told by Moroccan authors and storytellers, mainly Larbi Layachi (Driss ben Hamed Charhadi), Mohamed Choukri and Mohammed Mrabet. The translation work went on especially during the 1960s and 1970s, when his own production dropped, particularly in the wake of his wife's death in Málaga in 1973.

Such expertise goes beyond the knowledge attained by any traveler and it also shows Bowles's interest in Moroccan tradition. Marilyn Adler Papayanis has observed two stages in his expatriation narratives: a first stage that coincides with his early fiction "that organizes the expatriate experience around scenes of cruelty, bodily violation and death," and a second stage that explore the "possibility of intersubjective recognition between the expatriate and the native" (*Writing in the Margins* 141). In my opinion, these stages correspond with two different sensitivities or aesthetic approaches: a traveler's stage, concerned with external descriptions and territory, and an ethnographer's stage, more concerned with traditions and with the encounter with the Other. Did he succeed in his enterprise of portraying the Other? Was he able to translate the encounter with the Other for a Western readership? V. Y. Mudimbe asserts that anthropology is not the way to reveal alterity, only a reflection on "the distance separating savagery from civilization on the

[62] Bowles showed a prolific knowledge of this kind of texts, ranging from *kif* and the Sahara to social reality and travel literature. Here is a list of forewords and introductions: Introduction to *Yallah*, with photographs by Peter W. Haeberlin, Zürich: Conzett & Huber, 1956; New York: McDowell & Obolinsky, 1957; "*Kif*: Prologue and Compendium of Terms." Introduction to *The Book of Grass*. George Andrews and Simon Vikenoog (eds). New York: Grove Press, 1967; "Views of Tangier." Introduction to *Tanger: Vues choisies.* Photographs by Jellel Gastelli. Paris: Éditions Éric Koehler/Sand, 1991. Photographs by Jellel Gastelli; Introduction to *The Hakima: A Tragedy in Fez*. New York: Aperture Foundation, Inc., 1991, photographs and text by William Betsch; Foreword to *Relations and Revelations*, by David Herbert. London: Peter Owen, 1992; Preface to *Sahara to the Sea* (Photographs and text by Mary Cross, Introduction by Tahar Ben Jelloun). New York: Abbeville Press, 1995; Foreword to *Literary Trips: Following in the Footsteps of Fame*. Victoria Brooks (ed.). Vancouver: Great Escapes Publishing, 2000.

diachronic line of process" (Mudimbe 15). If we replace "savagery" for "primitivism," we find the breeding ground in which Bowles's fiction flourished. Edward Said warns us, however, of the role of the anthropologist as a lone observer and judge of foreign cultures: "there is no vantage *outside* the actuality of relationships between cultures, between unequal imperial and non-imperial powers, between different Others, a vantage that might allow one the epistemological privilege of somehow judging, evaluating, and interpreting free of the encumbering interests, emotions, and engagements of the ongoing relationships themselves" ("Representing the Colonized" 306). Said suggested that the role of the anthropologist can be only attained by a native, offering a truthful, unimposed ethnographic point of view, offering a resistance to the discipline and the praxis of anthropology (310).

Besides, Bowles convictions towards the relationship between East and West, developed versus underdeveloped, were not far away from Claude Levi-Strauss' observations. For Bowles the West needed to "dump vast quantities of waste matter, which it dumps on less fortunate peoples," quoting Levi-Strauss' words to support his argument: "What travel discloses to us first of all is our own garbage, flung in the face of humanity" (*Their Heads Are Green and Their Hands Are Blue* vii).[63] In the same text, Bowles assumes that the purpose of going somewhere new is to "seek diversity," and that such seeker of the picturesque "sees the spread of technology as an unalloyed abomination" (vii). But this seeker is not a traveler in the quest of romantic sights, landscapes ruins and local markets, his object of observation is people and their customs, and that situates this seeker/traveler closer to the amateur anthropologist. Bowles here maintains a classical anthropological view of differentiated cultures undergoing a process of change; the less familiar they are, the more the Western traveler can learn from them or simply enjoy. In fact, as an author Bowles pursues the same experiences as the anthropologist, he commits

[63] See also *Tristes Tropiques*, 38.

them to paper in his works, even though there is not a scholarly project behind. He also participates of the anthropological pessimism of Levi-Strauss in *Tristes Tropiques* (1955), both mourning the shrinking of the world through travel and tourism and foreseeing the advent of a global, undifferentiated monoculture.

Paul Bowles was not naïve in his approach to foreign peoples. To the idea of becoming part of a different culture, he replied in an interview in 1974 that it was a "Rousseauesque fantasy," that there was no such thing as going "backwards." Bowles argued that the only way for a Westerner to approach an "archaic" culture was "with the idea of *learning* from it," hoping to "absorb the alien from his own benefit" (*Conversations* 77). Many of his characters tried to experience this Rousseauesque fantasy with disastrous consequences, but Bowles always maintained this almost-scholarly detachment and considered Moroccan culture a wide and promising field of study.[64]

In addition, Bowles's writings and opinions are articulated around different assumptions towards culture that directly relate to a certain anthropologist sensitivity: technology versus magic, developed versus primitive, surface versus depth, corruption and degeneration of culture versus examples of purity preserved intact.

Even though the works of Paul Bowles have been approached from many perspectives—existentialism, surrealism, romanticism, Orientalism—not many critics have studied at length his connection to anthropology. The ones to mention this are fairly recent studies that I will briefly introduce now.

Allen Hibbard in *Paul Bowles: Magic and Morocco* (2004) has compared key notions in Bowles's stories to Edward Westermarck's anthropologic concepts (103). Westermarck was an American ethnographer who lived in Morocco in the 1920s and

[64] See also *Conversations* 169.

compiled the most important Moroccan traditions in the two volumes of *Ritual and Belief in Morocco* (1926). Hibbard points out that Bowles's project (along with Yeats', Crowley's and the "early anthropologists'") can be situated "in the context of modern preoccupations with the primitive" (69). This fascination with the primitive included an interest on magic, trance music, sex, and drugs. Greg Mullins has perceived a more explicit connection between the author and anthropology. In *Colonial Affairs* (2002), he draws a difference between Bowles's early years in Morocco, in which he embodied the classic traveler, and Bowles the anthropologist, the one who had become more and more immersed in an alien culture, who has become fluent in its language, and devoted himself to the translation of native tales. Mullins declares that Bowles's aim to preserve Moroccan music and oral literature can be interpreted as an anthropological enterprise. In doing so, Bowles was concerned with establishing "difference between 'primitive' and 'modern' people", unaware, on the contrary, of the fact that he was involved in the "production of new forms of knowledge" (25). In his "romance" with tradition, he was participating in the nostalgia common to travel writers: mourning the loss of an authentic, "pure" non-West.

Sebastian Skeaping is the only author who has written an extended study on the influence of anthropology on Bowles's writings. In his unpublished thesis *Anthropology and Ethnography in the Writings of Paul Bowles* (Cambridge 2002), Skeaping explores how the fascination with the primitive acts as an undercurrent in the writings of the author, starting with his surrealist experiments with poetry and ending with the "Moroccanization" of his stories and his interest in translation.

Brian T. Edwards does not connect Bowles to anthropology, but in *Morocco Bound* (2005) he explores diverse American representations of Morocco, starting with Bowles and ending with the choice of several renowned anthropologists. Edwards explains how,

starting in the 1960s, it became popular for the American youth to travel to Morocco. I have argued that this was also thanks to the presence of the Beats in Tangier in the late 1950s and early 1960s and to the popularization of Bowles's works.[65] Edwards has called this phenomenon "hippie Orientalism" (248). According to Edwards, the popularization of Morocco not only opened the country to vagabonds and hippies looking for drugs and exoticism, but also to anthropologists (252) whose interpretation of "culture" itself resonates with "hippie counterculture" (254).

As Mullins aptly argues, as years went by, Bowles seemed to be increasingly interested in anthropology, and more specifically, in the preservation of certain aspects of Moroccan culture. We have to bear in mind that some Orientalist writers mentioned in the appendix were also concerned with the rapid changes Moroccan culture was undergoing. That was the case of Meakin, Bensusan, and Wharton; all their texts are imbued with a certain dose of nostalgia while referring to the country and its culture. Mainly Wharton and Bensusan were absolutely aware of their role as the last witness of a world that was coming to an end. But they aimed to preserve their impressions, that is, their subjective interpretation. They were not compiling any cultural patrimony nor were they scientifically recording any Moroccan tradition. The same distinctions found between Orientalism and anthropology can also be applied to the writings of Paul Bowles: on the one hand, his fiction and non-fiction, on the other, his work as translator, compiler, and expert.

Translation also helped him to develop his own fiction, as in the case of the stories in *A Hundred Camels in the Courtyard* (1962). In one of his interviews, he declared that his writings had been "affected" by the translations, in the sense that he had been trying "to get another way of thinking, noncasual… Those were experiments. Arbitrary use of disparate

[65] See chapter 4.5 "Transgression and displacement: Paul Bowles and the Beat Connection," 202-203.

elements" (*Conversations* 97).

Besides, music also has an important place in the preservation of Moroccan culture. The recording of Moroccan music in the late fifties was perhaps the most important anthropologic contribution ever made by Bowles. Aided by a grant from the Rockefeller Foundation, he travelled around Morocco to record traditional music for the Library of Congress. Even though the grant only covered six months, Bowles ended up travelling two years thanks to it (1958-1960).

3.2.1. The notion of myth

Not only his travels would inspire Bowles's writing, but also his readings. It is very enlightening that in 1945 Bowles had been reading "some ethnographic books" (*Without Stopping* 261) with translated texts from the Tarahumaras,[66] a native people of northwestern Mexico, and the Arapesh tradition, a tribe from Papua New Guinea. This happened at the same time he was translating myths for *View* magazine. "Little by little the desire came to me to invent my own myths, adopting the point of view of the primitive mind. The only way I could devise for simulating that state was the old Surrealist method of abandoning conscious control and writing whatever words came to the pen" (*Without Stopping* 261). There are several ideas in this paragraph that would prove to be key in the development of Bowles's writing career: first, the writing stems from a para-ethnographic interest on native peoples; second, there is a conscious effort to reproduce the point of view of the "primitive mind," that is, the narrator aims at adopting the place of the other; third, there is an implicit interest in myth, primitivism, magic and the unconscious. Those four elements would be the pillars holding up most of his works.

[66] The same year, Antonin Artaud (1896-1948) published an ethnographic travel book entitled *The Tarahumaras*, after visiting Mexico in 1936. Even though I have not found any further evidence, Bowles might have referred to his book, as it included texts transcribed and translated by Artaud.

At first, his writings took the form of animal legends, and then they became legends of animals disguised as "basic human beings" (*Without Stopping* 261). It was the case of "The Scorpion," his first short story, published in *View* (issue 5) in 1945. Seeing the positive reaction, he "went on inventing myths" (262). According to Bowles, "the subject matter of the myths soon turned from 'primitive' to contemporary, but the objectives and behavior of the protagonists remained the same as in the beast legends" (*Without Stopping* 262).

In the mentioned story, a woman living in a cave lets a scorpion enter her mouth, but is unwilling to let her son enter the cave and to acknowledge an old man living nearby. There are no allusions to specific locations neither languages, the story could be set anywhere, anytime, acquiring the connotations of a fable or a parable. In the story, the presence of the scorpion is symbolic, perhaps a symbol of familiarity for a woman that prefers loneliness than the company other people. The scorpion in the story is clearly a totemic figure.[67] When the woman realizes the scorpion is not going to bite her "A great feeling of happiness went through her […] He crawled slowly down her throat and was hers" (*Collected Stories* 119). By receiving the scorpion, the woman is establishing a bond with the animal, a kinship that family cannot provide.

The totemic identification man-animal is repeated in "Allal" (1977), where an antisocial boy exchanges his body with a snake after eating *majoun* paste. In a cathartic moment, Allal lets go the rage that has always been at his heart and attacks a group of men before they take them down. Metamorphosis becomes a radical example of the self's undoing in Bowles's works that I have previously mentioned in the first section of this dissertation.

[67] In a letter to Alec France, Bowles mentions having read Sigmund Freud's *Totem and Taboo* (1913). *In Touch*, 464.

In *Dialectics of Enlightenment* (1944), Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno explained: "myth is always obscure and luminous at once. It has always been distinguished by its familiarity and its exemption from the world of concepts" (xvii). Originally, myth was a protonarrative: "Myth sought to report, to name, to tell of origins—but therefore also to narrate, record, explain" (Horkheimer and Adorno 4). By trying to make his own myths using automatic writing, Bowles was trying to go back to early protonarratives in which there was a representation of reality influenced by magic.

Roland Barthes also explored the notion of myth-making in *Mythologies* (1957). Barthes argued that myth was a "type of speech," and therefore it was conveyed through discourse. He shares Horkheimer and Adorno's assumption that myth was a mode of signification, even though he was trying to offer a postmodern study of myth instead of a historic revision. Barthes defined myth as a "language-robbery," as it was always concerned with transforming a meaning into a form (131). With his interest in creating new myths, Bowles also aimed at creating a new mode of signification taking as a model the "primitive mind," inspired by his ethnographic readings. But for him myth was also a way of bringing the unconscious into light, of transforming the unconscious material in order to reshape it into fiction, that is, an unconscious "robbery." According to Bowles, the antecedent of all of his writings was the unconscious, the only thing on which an author could rely, "the integrity of unconscious," as Gena Dagel Caponi defined it (*Conversations* 199).[68] At another level, Bowles would argue that his characters, after being confronted to the foreign and its dangers, were "unable to recapture the previous sense of reality" (*Conversations* 139). The subject's undoing unquestionably leads to a no-man's land that

[68] We can interpret that the unconscious is the force that rules the "synthetic cosmos" to which Bowles alluded (See chapter 2.5.1, pages 59-65). In his synthetic cosmos, story, plot, characters, landscape, structure—they are all part of the same unity. His writing method offers another clue: even if it is neither entirely surrealist nor "organic," it is based on automatic writing. Bowles preferred to combine the free flow of consciousness with a conscious technique, and always claimed that he didn't know what was going to happen until the book was finished.

directly relates to an unconscious stage in which the subject loses his/her identity and becomes an a-cultural being, bereft of any links to his/her Western roots and oblivious to the new references of the foreign culture.

Bowles's interest in the primitive mind and culture, together with the avoidance of "traditional" writing methods and the need to relate to the unconscious, was intrinsically linked to a rejection of technology and "modern" life. In Bowles, the compulsion to get away from America and the rest of "civilized" countries responds to the realization of the dehumanization of modern life: "everything slightly dead: a certain human element is missing" (*Conversations* 46). Besides, Bowles shared in a certain way Horkheimer and Adorno's concern with the harmful effects of modern societies upon the human condition. In the travel essay "Fish Traps and Private Business" (1950), he calls 20th century modernization "gangrene" (*Their Heads Are Green and Their Hands Are Blue* 14). He did not want to have anything to do with modern advances such as "telephones, television, airplanes" (*Conversations* 160), or any item of "American gadgetry" (169) that the rest of the world rushed to incorporate and to imitate. For Bowles, the small countries replaced what they destroyed with "imitations of things from the United States […] They don't want to leave any traces of the past […] They want to erase any memory" (*Conversations* 240). In *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, Horkheimer and Adorno also blamed technology for producing "neither concepts nor images, nor the joy of understanding, but method, exploitation of the labor of others, capital" (2).

3.2.2. Lévy-Bruhl and *la mentalité primitive*

In *La Mentalité Primitive* (1922) the sociologist and anthropologist Lucien Lévy-Bruhl declared that abstract thinking and reasoning –as Westerners knew it— did not correspond to the mentality of the "primitive" peoples. In this sense the behavior of the

"primitives" is permeated by a common belief: within reality, human beings, divine creatures, spirits and invisible forces coexist. In addition, objects and beings alike are involved in a complex network of mystic participations and exclusions. Thus, Lévy-Bruhl concludes, primitive mentality is essentially mystic, and this peculiarity has deep effects on the way of thinking, feeling, and acting of the "primitives." The visible and invisible worlds form a whole; this is why rituals, dreams, and omens are so important for them. Lévy-Bruhl even argues that a world in which the "participation mystique" is so pervasive is necessarily more complex than the world as Westerners know it. What happens when such "primitive" cultures face Western civilization and a completely different mentality? Primitive mentality is replaced by "modern" thinking.

Even though Lévy-Bruhl's theory of a double mentality was refuted, among others, by Claude Lévi-Strauss and Clifford Geertz,[69] it had a wide influence in its day. V. Y. Mudimbe lists Lévy-Bruhl as one of the anthropologists of his age responsible for reducing people to the status of mere objects with his theories, especially considering that he used to work by proxy following the model of natural sciences of the time (*The Invention of Africa* 75-76). Despite the fact that the trend in anthropology between the wars started to change and the anthropologists started to interact directly with their subjects of study, experts still considered Africans as a frozen society that must evolve to the dynamism of Western civilization. For Mudimbe, the policies of applied anthropology "had taken the view of colonialism and focused on African structures in order to integrate them into the new historical process" (76).

Millicent Dillon explains how Bowles had read the works by Lucien Lévy-Bruhl while he was living in Paris, around 1931 or 1932, and how "impressed" he had been by his

[69] For a good summary on the subject, see Enrique Anrubia. "Acercamiento a la noción cognoscitiva de 'representación colectiva'- El caso histórico de Lévy-Bruhl." *Gazeta de Antropología*, 24 (2). Granada: Universidad de Granada, 2008.

ideas, mainly by the notion of "participation mystique." Through it, "self and other, subject and object, past and present, animate and inanimate are linked in such a way that there are no clear borders between them." This idea was even extended to the realm of feelings (*You Are Not I* 173).

Lévy-Bruhl assumed that the Western world was intellectualized, its mindset built upon order and reason, unresponsive to the natural world. On the contrary, the primitive mind does not respond in the same way to the exterior stimulus. Referring to the illiterate Moroccans, Bowles explained that he doubted they knew the difference between fantasy and fact (*Conversations* 199). For the author, this happens because Moroccans have not evolved in the same way as Westerners have, they have "whole sections missing in their 'psyche'" (*Conversations* 130).

Lévy-Bruhl believed that there was a common force that linked the primitives with the plants, objects and animals of the natural world. Therefore, there is a mystic force – *participation mystique*— that pervades the world of the primitives. And the primitives see this world full of mystic forces in an emotional way (the opposite of the logical mind of the Westerners). This mentality engrossed in mystic participations, tells Lévy-Bruhl, is "orientated to the unseen world" (218). Any enquiries beyond the immediate understanding of the primitive are frequently answered through divination methods, such as visions, omens, prayers, or revelations of the unseen powers. As the primitive mentality is essentially mystic, this participation permeates "the whole method of thinking, feeling and acting" (431). When asked if he believed in the existence of *djenoun* (genii), figures that are frequently found in the Moroccan popular mythology, Bowles answered he believed "in the existence of them as projected by common belief" (*Conversations* 17). That is, he believed in the mystic participation that made possible that the rest of the "primitive"

community believed in them.

It seems that the themes and the logic underneath some of Bowles's Moroccan stories correspond with Lévy-Bruhl's notions. Besides the fact that rituals, dreams, and omens are very present in his fiction, we can find numerous examples of how the visible and invisible worlds form a whole; I am not referring to some sort of magical realism. It is a way of constructing a reality that suited the world as he thought primitives perceived it. For instance, "A Thousand Days for Mokhtar" (1959) tells us the story of Mokhtar, a man who lives an ordinary life but one day starts feeling an eerie "warning" inside him (*Collected Stories* 175). After dreaming of killing his friend Bouchta, he rushes to check if he is fine, and finds him in his butcher's stall in the market. Mokhtar is visibly relieved and happy to find his friend well, but Bouchta is angry at him, and reminds him he still owes him twenty-two *duros* from a purchase. When Mokhtar denies it, both men start quarrelling and Mokhtar tries to stop Bouchta from hurting him, while yelling at the onlookers "Last night I dreamed that I came here and killed this man, who is my friend. I do not want to kill him" (*Collected Stories*178). Due to reasons unknown, Bouchta falls dead and Mohktar asks the witnesses to vouch for his innocence. When he is taken to the local authorities, the Qadi establishes that only an evil man can have evil dreams and therefore Bouchta died as a result of Mohktar's dream. He is sentenced to thousand days in jail, where he is content, after remembering that he actually owed Bouchta the twenty-two *duros*.

Bowles mentioned to a friend that the story was based on an account that his friend Smail Abdelkader told him in 1947,[70] so the source material came directly from a local interlocutor. This short story is a good example of how primitives have their own logic and act according to it. In a Western court –or better, in a fictionalized Western court—, a trial

[70] Paul Bowles to Alec France, March 2, 1975, *In Touch*, 465.

like that would have been impossible, but all the characters of the story –Mokhtar, the onlookers from the market, and the judge— share the same sense of logic and agree to interpret a dream as a perfectly plausible weapon in a crime. For the primitive mind, mystic implies belief in forces and influences, which, though imperceptible to sense, are nevertheless real. What might seem "childish and absurd in our eyes" (Lévy-Bruhl 12) responds to this primitive mentality. Perhaps the warning Mokhtar felt before the dream, the feeling of "having entered a new region of his life" (*Collected Stories* 175), can be interpreted as a clue for the Western reader to access the mythical reality of the primitives.

In *La Mentalité Primitive*, Lévy-Bruhl also stressed the importance of imagination and memory in the literature of the primitives: "Their legends and their proverbs often betray a delicate and roguish power of observation and their myths, a ready and oft-times poetical imagination" (Lévy-Bruhl 444). For Bowles the illiterate storytellers told "pure narrative," beautiful on its simplicity by the use of basic vocabulary. Such a simple and pure style would have influenced his writings since he took residence in Morocco (*Conversations* 242).

In a similar way, we can link the mind of the primitive peoples with the mind of the child, in the sense that they both replace reason with memories and imagination. As we have seen in the previous section,[71] Bowles saw a childish quality in the inhabitants of Tangier and also felt that, as spectators, foreigners should look at Moroccan reality with the eyes of a child in order to truly enjoy it.[72] Imagination and magic play an important role in Bowles's fiction and they are frequently intertwined. Critic Richard F. Patteson has argued that his fascination with magic draws back to his childhood: "Bowles had long been

[71] See chapter 2.5, pages 50-51.

[72] This is also a direct link between the author's ideas and the Surrealist movement. Breton explains "The mind which plunges into Surrealism relives with glowing excitement the best part of its childhood […] From childhood memories, and from a few others, there emanates a sentiment of being unintegrated, and then later of *having gone astray*" (*Surrealist Manifesto* 39).

fascinated with the role of sorcery in Moroccan life, but his interest in the metamorphosing powers of magic extends even further back, into his earliest childhood. The stories he told himself then, many of which he wrote down, were often tales of secret, magical places that no one else could enter" (*A World Outside* 129-130).

In *Psychological Types* (1921) Karl Gustav Jung retakes Lévy-Bruhl's idea of "participation mystique" adding a new dimension: for Jung, the primitive mentality is not replaced by modern thinking, but "primitive" thinking is the initial psychological state of all human beings, a state of unconsciousness. In the previous chapter we have concluded the unconscious is transformed into fiction by using those myths. Similarly, the poet T. S. Eliot also embraced the notion of a primitive mentality, but he refused to accept that such mentality was absent from modern societies, arguing that it survived as a substratum of the modern unconsciousness.[73] Even though we know Bowles had read Jung and found him interesting,[74] we cannot know for sure that Bowles had read *Psychological Types* in particular or that he had been familiar with Eliot's approach to Lévy-Bruhl. However, there seems to be a breeding ground in which primitive mentality, unconscious, mystic participation and myth acquired a significant importance for the author.

Among other theorists and travel writers of the 19th and early 20th centuries, V. Y. Mudimbe condemns Lévy-Bruhl for inventing the concept of a static and prehistoric tradition of Africa. His theories would be used by Belgian and French colonizers "to postulate a clear distinction between prelogism and Cartesianism, primitiveness and civilization" (Mudimbe 190).

[73] See David E. Chinitz. *T.S. Eliot and the Cultural Divide*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005, 79-80.
[74] See *Conversations*, 196 and *In Touch*, 464.

Lévy-Bruhl's ideas, however outdated, had a strong influence upon Bowles's mindset. Even though such differences between a logical (Western) mentality and a prelogical (primitive) mentality may seem openly racist today, we have to bear in mind that Bowles was not trying to pass his stories as scientific ethnographic studies. Besides, he did not feel tempted to adhere to the colonial trends in anthropology in the mid-thirties that applied colonial assumptions and were responsible for a reductionist approach to the primitive peoples. By becoming interested in the "primitive mentality," Bowles presented his Moroccan characters as cultural riddles instead of readable objects of study.

3.2.3. Recurrent ethnographic elements in Bowles's short fiction

In the travel essay "Africa Minor" (1959), Bowles defined "writing about" any part of Africa using a vivid comparison: "like trying to draw a picture of a roller coaster in motion" (*Their Heads Are Green and Their Hands Are Blue* 22). He was referring to the process of constant change that was taking place in the continent with the decolonization process and alluding at the same time to the difficulty of capturing such reality on paper. The image of the moving roller coaster evokes a powerful metaphor that the Mexican poet Octavio Paz used in his tribute to Lévi-Strauss, when he called anthropology the art of dancing above the abyss,[75] in allusion to the elusive nature of the science. But Bowles's reflection is strikingly similar to Rabinow's definition of tradition, a "moving image of the past." Writing becomes an instrument for recording the fast-changing tradition, an act of symbolic appropriation of cultural episodes. A specific tone also derives from Bowles's definition: writing grows into an activity that is going to be inevitably tinged with nostalgia.

[75] Paz, Octavio. *Claude Lévi-Strauss o el nuevo festín de Esopo*. Ciudad de México: Joaquín Mortíz, 1962, 128.

The traditional aspects that Bowles researched were not linked to mainstream Islam. As any ethnographer or anthropologist, he was attracted by the cultural manifestations that were unique from his point of view, the heterodox marginal manifestations, the belief of common people, such as the cult of the saints or *marabouts*, the practices of the religious brotherhoods and their trance rituals, and the belief in genii (*djenoun*). In the same way that Bowles had learnt Moroccan Arabic instead of Classical Arabic, he also opted to know popular manifestations rather than those linked to high culture. Other influences of Moroccan folklore unrelated to heterodox Islam that can be traced in the writings of Paul Bowles are the belief in magic and witchcraft, the importance of dreams and the use of natural drugs.

The first short stories Paul Bowles wrote while living in Tangier were not "Moroccan" stories, as the setting, characters and themes were unrelated to the country. "A Distant Episode" (1947) and "The Delicate Prey" (1948) were the first two short stories that included a North African context. Bowles wrote thirty-three short stories out of a total of fifty-eight using a North African background and native characters, without taking into account the non-fiction essays of *Their Heads Are Green and Their Hands Are Blue*. From those thirty-three stories, twenty of them incorporate only native protagonists, eight of them present intercultural encounters and five include only expatriate characters. If we turn to the four novels he wrote, three of them –*The Sheltering Sky, The Spider's House* and *Let It Come Down*— portray a North African setting and Western and native characters, but only *The Spider's House* tells us part of the story from the point of view of a local. We can only conclude that the North African themes and mindset have an extraordinary presence in Bowles's fiction. If we turn to the "wholly" North African stories, we will find many examples of cultural manifestations that professional anthropologists researched as well.

3.2.3.1. Dreams

Dreams are very present in Paul Bowles's short fiction. "Moroccans are obsessed with dreams," he wrote to a friend in 1975.[76] In *Ritual and Belief in Morocco*, Westermarck devotes a long section to dreams, arguing that they carry magical forces and presages. Moroccans, however, believe that "during sleep the soul is absent from the body […] and they maintain that what they hear or see in their dreams is a reality and not an illusion" (II, 46). Presages of events to come are found in "The Scorpion" (1948), where the protagonist, an old woman, refuses to go to the big city with his son until she dreams of traveling there. The young Moroccan artist in "Midnight Mass" (1976), dreams of a room away from his crowded family house and the expatriate that owns the mountain villa he is visiting offers him one… Only to find that in his absence the artist's entire family has taken over the whole house. Another omen becomes true in "The Delicate Prey" (1950), when Driss feels "a hostile presence" in his consciousness that alerts him the Moungari has killed his uncles (205).

Perhaps where reality and dream collide more ostensibly is in "A Thousand Days for Mokhtar" (1959), already mentioned in the previous chapter. Mokhtar dreams of killing his friend Bouchta and, when Bouchta dies for unknown reasons, he claims that he never touched him, only dreamt of his death. Afterwards, he is condemned to a thousand days in jail, deemed to have killed Bouchta with his dream.

Different people can also dream interconnected dreams. It is the case of the characters in the novella *Too Far From Home* (1993), where two characters built a complex relationship through dreams. I would not delve deeper into this work, as it is set in the south of the Sahara on the banks of the river Niger, but it offers a very interesting perspective: Anita, the American woman who visits his expatriate brother, believes their servant Sekou stares her at night forcing her to have the same bad dream over and over.

[76] Paul Bowles to Alec France, March 2, 1975, *In Touch*, 465.

She is certain the dream is a bad omen, like Kit's anguish conveys a sense of doom in *The Sheltering Sky*. Finally, we learn that, in her dream, she is forced to swallow some pills by two shadowy characters. However, the dream is not a presage of something bad happening to her, but a presage of the death of the two young Americans that almost run over her and Sekou with their motorcycles. On the other hand, Sekou thinks Anita has cursed the young Americans for putting her life in danger and he dreams she does not forgive their offense. In a chain of magic and dream influenced by intercultural misconceptions, Anita is found guilty for the death of the two young men.

In the story "Istikhara, Anaya, Medagan and the Medaganat" (1976), published in the volume *Things Gone and Things Still Here*, dreams appear once again connected to death. It was initially conceived as an essay, so we might consider that the story records real facts, even though I have not been able to ascertain their accuracy. If we take them as real events, the story is a piece of Saharan history in the middle of the 19th century, providing interesting anthropological evidence. The story begins by comparing the alien appearance of the Sahara with the unfamiliar "patterns of human comportment" (*Collected Stories* 455). These behavioral patterns being the subject of the story, the author is positioning himself as the observant anthropologist. The notion of *istikhara* belongs both to Koranic and *hadith* tradition: as Bowles aptly defines, it is an "invocation, offered up just before going to sleep, in which the supplicant implores Allah to send a dream which will make it possible for him to solve his difficulties" (455). On the other hand, *anaya* does not belong to Islamic tradition, but Bowles defines it as a remnant of feudal society by which a warrior defeated in battle could ask for mercy by touching the enemies' cloak, thus becoming his slave but preserving his life. The story reads both as a historical account and ethnographic trove, telling the violent encounters between the Medaganat and other desert tribes. When the Medaganat pervert the notion of *anaya*, the *istikhara* stops working: "One

may pray, but if one is not in a state of grace the prayer fails to get through. Once Medagan had betrayed his protectors, he was not in a condition which permitted contact with the Deity" (458).

3.2.3.2. Magic and witchcraft

Bowles firmly believed that there was more magic in primitive cultures than in developed ones. Magic was "part of the culture" in Morocco and that was the reason why magic was so present in his Moroccan stories (*Conversations* 161). He differentiated between defensive magic or *tqaf* (talismans and charms used for protection or to prevent someone from doing something) and black magic or *shor*, practiced to cause evil, which was embedded "in the fabric of society" (220). In his autobiography, he defined magic as the "secret connection between the world of nature and the consciousness of man, a hidden but direct passage which bypassed the mind" (*Without Stopping* 125). Horkheimer and Adorno adopted a more formal view on magic. They considered it a form of representation: an object used in an incantation or a concoction, even a sacrifice, becomes a substitution, a symbolic replacement of some evil or a god. In opposition to the chaotic but classifiable world of nature, magic "marks a step toward discursive logic" (*Dialectic of Enlightenment* 6). Franz Fanon saw in the Western interest in magic a maneuver to diminish and animalize the "primitive" peoples: "Black magic, primitive mentality, animism, animal eroticism, it all floods over me. All of it typical of peoples that have not kept pace with the human race. Or, if one prefers, this is humanity at its lowest" (*The Wretched of the Earth* 126). Bowles presented all these elements in his short stories, but he was more concerned with transmitting the "values" of a primitive world because he thought they were better than any kind of modernization. Bowles was well aware of Fanon's concern: "Witchcraft is a loaded word. To use it evokes… a regression to archaic behavior. Here's an accepted facet of daily

life… only what you'd call offensive magic is considered "witchcraft." Defensive magic… is holy, and can only be efficacious if it's practiced under the aegis of the Koran" (*Conversations with Paul Bowles* 130).

In "A Friend of the World" (1961), Bowles introduces the subject of magic by poisoning. Salam makes the Jewish women in his alley believe he has brought in a witch to put a spell on her daughter because he thinks the woman has killed his cat after he named it Mimí, which is her daughter's name. It is Salam's wit, not magic, what triggers the events of the story, but at the end, everyone thinks the witch is to blame. In his stories, Bowles frequently plays with the characters' credulity: those who believe in magic and superstition can be easily tricked. The same happens in "The Hyena" (1962), a modern fable. In the story, the hyena lures a stork, that believes in its magic, into a cave to kill it, while exclaiming: "Allah gave me something better than magic […] he gave me a brain" (*Collected Stories* 353).

Sometimes the mechanism works the other way round: when an incredulous underestimates the power of magic, he becomes its victim, as in "Mejdoub" (1974), where the protagonist tries to seek advantage of the credulity of the inhabitants of a town posing as a *mejdoub*, a holy maniac who believes is possessed by spirits, and ends up truly deranged in a mental asylum. In "The Wind at Beni Midar" (1962), Driss turns to a witch to get a powder to poison his superior, an incredulous Moroccan who despises traditional beliefs and venerates French rationalism.

Witches and evil-doers are frequently women in Bowles's stories, something confirmed by Westermarck in *Ritual and Belief in Morocco*, who mentions they "can really do wonderful things by sorcery" (1:571). For instance, in "The Garden" (1964), a wife poisons his husband with *tseuheur* because she wrongly thinks he has hidden a treasure.

The evil-doer is a man in "By the Water" (1946). He is called Lazrag and has the power to transform people into animals at his will. He is also able to transform himself into a crab. Metamorphoses are another form of magic: "Allal" (1977), a "folk fantasy told in realistic terms" (*Conversations* 138), tells the story of a boy who exchanges his body with a snake. Bowles asserted that: "Being able to enter into the minds of animals is a recurrent Moroccan fantasy. A few adepts have been successful in the attempt" (*Conversations* 142).

"Things Gone and Things Still Here" (1976) reads as a full ethnographic account. An essay rather than a story, it tells lengthily about religious brotherhoods, the existence of genies and their doings, and records a common practice of everyday *tqaf*: when a woman wants to curse a man, she puts a spell into a folding knife and buries it in the ground to prevent the man from having sexual intercourse. The man is accursed until someone finds the knife and unfolds it. Westermarck records the same specific practice too (1:210, 571), mentioning the same details Bowles does. For critic Raj Chandarlapaty, "Things Gone and Things Still Here" established "Bowles's ethnographic lament captured in the interviews" (Chandarlapaty 61), the longing for the golden days he had witnessed in his first visits to Morocco in the 1930s. Ethnographic material proves to be not only the inspiration for his short stories, but also their very subject. His duty was the ethnographer's: to record things still here and mourn those things forever gone.

3.2.3.3. Evil spirits: *Jnūn (Jinn)*

One of the most frequent characters of Islamic mythology is the genie or *jinn* (pl. *jnūn*. Bowles uses the French adaptation of the word: *djinn/djenoun*). Bowles talked about the existence of these beings in an interview in 1965: "I believe in the existence of them as projected by common belief… Obviously they do not exist outside the minds of people who believe in them, then they do not exist" (*Conversations with Paul Bowles* 17). Once

again, the interest is placed in the common belief: what gives the necessary strength to something a priori absurd is the fact that everybody is willing to believe it. Quite similarly, Westermarck asserts that, by believing in *djenoun*, people are responsible for their existence, as they seem "to have been invented to explain strange and mysterious phenomena" (1:26). These creatures live in a parallel universe a few feet underneath the earth's surface, an exact replica of our world. Sometimes, however, both worlds collide and they show themselves to men in different forms. Bowles wrote to a friend that his chauffeur had crashed his car after a *jinn* attacked him, mentioning it quite casually: "The *djinn* seized the steering-wheel and jerked it out of his hand when he was changing gears."[77] Critic Allen Hibbard has argued that, while Bowles did not believe in magic himself, magic was one of the aspects that made living in Morocco so interesting for him (*Paul Bowles: Magic and Morocco* 53). But he reacted to these generalized beliefs as a "dispassionate observer," then took those amazing stories, "run them through the mill of his imagination, and retold them to Western audiences, ever aware of the appetite for exotic tales" (*Paul Bowles: Magic and Morocco* 54-55) as the invisible spectator of the little dramas performed by Moroccans in their everyday life.[78] In any case, Bowles's ethnographic knowledge was consistent and informed, showing a deep understanding of the Moroccan lore. For instance, he tells us of the presence of *jnūn* in the fire, also recorded by Westermarck (1:314) in "He of the Assembly:" "I looked in the fire and I saw an eye in there, like the eye that's left when you burn *chibb* and you know there was a *djinn* in the house" (*Collected Stories* 244).

The figure of the *jinn* also appears briefly in "The Wind at Beni Midar," when Driss, an incredulous soldier, assures his superior he has lost his gun after a *jinn* stole it. In

[77] Letter to Peggy Glanville-Hicks, November 5, 1951, *In Touch*, 242.
[78] Bowles allegedly had black magic performed in his own house. Many biographers and critics have written about the spell that Jane's lover, Cherifa, cast on her. See Green, 186-187, 318-319, Spencer Carr, 200, 211, Hibbard's *Paul Bowles: Magic and Morocco*, 55-64.

"Things Gone and Things Still Here," Bowles's "ethnographic lament," he discusses at length the figure of this genie: "For people living in the country today the *djinn* is an accepted, if dreaded, concomitant of daily life. The world of *djenoun* is too close for comfort" (*Collected Stories* 479). He tells about their underground ecosystem, their ways, their intercourse with humans, their presence in rivers, drains, and other places where there is running water, always maintaining a subjective, casual approach, as it would be writing about some real events. For critic Arthur Redding, Bowles always maintained a "studied cultivation of detachment" (Redding 111), an attitude that originated in the 1940s with his deliberate dismissal of American values and the abandonment of his political activism.

The *jinn* usually lacks individuality, but there are some well-known genii. 'A'isha Qandisha is a particular *jinniya*, or female *jinn*. She is described as a beautiful grown-up woman who tries to seduce handsome young men. She appears for the first time in Bowles's short fiction in "He of the Assembly."[79] She is a fearsome figure, a threat in the mind of the protagonist, full of *kif*: "Aïcha Qandicha can be only where there are trees by running water. 'She comes only for single men by trees and fresh moving water. Her arms are gold and she calls in the voice of the most cherished one […] when a man sees her face he will never see another woman's face. He will make love with her all night […] Soon he will be an empty pod and he will leave this world for his home in Jehennem [hell]" (*Collected Stories* 249-250). In 1974 he affirmed that it was a character that induced "mass psychosis" (78). In 1981, he described her as a "vestigial Tanit," a preislamic deity that was transformed into a personification of evil by Muslims. He showed his anthropological knowledge by comparing her to La Llorona, the Mexican evil spirit who lives in the banks of streams and calls men at night. He also mentions that the Hamadsha, a religious

[79] The figure of 'A'isha Qandisha appears frequently in Bowles's interviews. See *Conversations*, 78-79, 105, 131.

brotherhood, leaves her sacrifices in the form of chickens, like they do with saints, and lists some ways of getting rid of her: Koranic formulas, a knife with a steel blade or even a magnet (*Conversations* 131). When asked if he believed in this spirit, Paul Bowles resorted to an explanation influenced by the primitive mentality: he believed Moroccans believed in 'A'isha Qandisha, not in 'A'isha Qandisha itself. "To me there's no difference between belief in a legend and belief in the thing itself. Once people believe in something, it becomes part of the truth for them" (*Conversations* 105).

Westermarck also included the figure of 'A'isha Qandisha in his atlas of ritual and belief. He explains that she is a popular figure in Northern Morocco (1:392) and defines her as a "libidinous" character. He also explains she is connected to the rites of the Hamadsha (1:393) and to the ancient rites of the goddess Astarte (1:395). We see how Bowles, without being a professional anthropologist, had reached the same conclusion by means of direct observation and possibly by his readings. The anthropological interest in the she-demon did not fade away. In 1980, Vincent Capranzano published *Tuhami: Portrait of a Moroccan*, telling the story of his informant, a Meknes tile-maker who was convinced he was married to the seductive 'A'isha Qandisha.

3.2.3.4. Religious brotherhoods and trance rituals

If in the case of the existence of *jnūn* or 'A'isha Qandisha, Bowles argued he believed they existed in the minds of local people, he seemed to have a different opinion regarding religious brotherhoods and their trance rituals; when asked if he believed that, after cutting themselves during their dances they did not have any wounds the following day, he answered he believed so, and attributed the fact to the "different kind of consciousness" of the devout Muslims (*Conversations* 106). As a musician, Bowles was promptly attracted to these practices. In fact, he obtained a Rockefeller Grant to record

indigenous music in Morocco in 1958.[80] This is perhaps the closest he ever was to a field anthropologist, traveling to remote parts of the country with a tape-recorder, collecting evidence for its future preservation. The collection, sponsored by the Library of Congress, includes numerous recordings made by Bowles in 1959 during four six-week field trips as well as additional field recordings that he and his friend Christopher Wanklyn made between 1960 and 1962. Bowles recorded vocal and instrumental music of various tribes at 23 different locations throughout the country. The collection includes dance music, secular music, music for Ramadan and other Islamic ceremonies, and music for animistic rituals.[81] Another musical project involving a religious brotherhood was the album *Jilala* (1967), that featured recordings of the homonymous brotherhood made by Bowles and Brion Gysin.

In "The Rif, to Music" (1960), an essay included in the volume *Their Heads Are Green and Their Hands Are Blue*, Bowles declared that the most important element in Morocco's folk culture was its music. In a land in which "almost total illiteracy has been the rule […] a magnificent and highly evolved sense of rhythm which manifest itself in music and dance" (*Collected Stories* 778). Written after the experience of recording indigenous music throughout the country, the essay reads as a travel diary with explanations about his recording trip to the Rif and all the difficulties and anecdotes of the journey: bad hotels, bad roads, intercourse with local authorities, or the problems with the other members of the expedition, Wanklyn and their chauffeur Mohammed Larbi.

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[80] Bowles's contribution to ethnomusicology comprises: 2 boxes of manuscripts, 2 sound discs; 65 sound tape reels (circa 65 hours); 5 sound tape reels (circa 5 hours); 18 photographic prints. For more information, see "Paul Bowles Moroccan music collection, 1957-1989" in the Library of Congress online catalogue. Permanent link: http://lccn.loc.gov/2004695190.

[81] It was not the first time Bowles "collected" local music. Already in 1934, during his third stay in North Africa, Bowles acquired "what the French called Cheleuh records […] a popular genre evolved from the folk music of the Souss and sung in Tachelhait" (*Without Stopping* 172-173). Later, he would lend the Cheleuh records to the composer Henry Cowell, who was teaching at the New School for Social Research in New York the course, "Music of the World's Peoples". He asked Bowles to send a selection to Bela Bartok, who incorporated part of the material to his "Concerto for Orchestra."

Critic Hassan Bourara has argued that Bowles's "preservationist zeal" while compiling traditional music suited his own political agenda, as he seemingly was "more motivated by his resentment of the Nationalists than by defending the Amazigh cause."[82]

Religious brotherhoods are cults related to a dead saint, and they considered him their head and patron. Westermarck and Bowles list the same brotherhoods: the Derqaoua, the Aissaoua, the Haddaoua, the Hamadsha, the Jilala and the Guennaoua.[83] The brotherhoods and the cult of the saints do not belong to mainstream Islam; they are elements that escape Islamic doctrine that can be subscribed to the field of superstition or popular folklore in general terms. Unaccepted by the mainstream orthodoxy, they exist on the margins. Religious brotherhoods derive from Sufi doctrine, although this doctrine has frequently evolved to simple ritual, detached from its original meaning, or mixed with previous religious beliefs. The religious brotherhoods are organized around a leader, responsible for intonating a kind of liturgical prayer based on the Koran, the *hadith* or in other compositions made by Sufi masters. This intonation is memorized and recollected over and over, and has a complicated division in several sections. When a particular section is chanted, the rest of the brotherhood joins their leader. At a certain point, a collective trance is achieved by means of repetition. Rhythm is central for this performances, "which must deliver a certain kind of enthusiasm and joie de vivre, and provide for the possibility of raising the adept's spirits toward a trance experience" (Waugh 132). Together with rhythm goes music, mainly drums and sometimes also wind instruments. In Morocco, the music of some brotherhoods is strongly influenced by the Berber and African music. The members in a trance state "dance" following the rhythm of the words and music. As Bowles mentions in the essay "Africa Minor," "each brotherhood has its own songs and

[82] Hassan Bourara, "Aesthetics of Invisibility and Giving Voice."
[83] Bowles, "Africa Minor," *Collected Stories & Later Writings*, 724. Westermarck, *Ritual and Belief in Morocco*, vol. 1, 182-185. Westermarck lists some more cults, but argues that the Aissaoua, the Jilala and the Guennaoua are the most renowned due to their public performances for curative purposes.

drum rhythms, immediately recognizable as such by persons both within and outside the group. In early childhood rhythmical patterns and sequences of tones become a part of an adept's subconscious, and in later life it is not difficult to attain the trance state when one hears them again" (*Collected Stories* 724).

Some of the religious brotherhoods in Morocco also perform violent rites and self-lacerations. According to Franz Fanon, ritual violence in North Africa had a cathartic intent: "When they set out, the men and women were impatient… when they return, peace has come to the village; it is one more calm and unmoved" (*The Wretched of the Earth* 58). One of the Sufi orders that appear in Bowles's work is the Hamadsha, whose performances based on ecstatic trances and dramatic head-slashing rituals are described in the essay "Africa Minor," where Bowles writes: "the traveler who has been present at one of these indescribable gatherings will never forget it, although if he dislikes the sight of blood and physical suffering he may try hard to put it out of his mind. To me these spectacles are filled with great beauty […] the sight of ten or twenty thousand people actively declaring their faith […] can scarcely be anything but inspiring […] For the participants exhaustion and ecstasy are inseparable" (*Their Heads Are Green and Their Hands Are Blue* 24). Dyar, the protagonist of the novel *Let It Come Down* (1952), watches the same rite: "The blade glinted, struck at it on a down beat of the drum pattern. And again. And again and again, until the arm and hand were shining black. Then the other arm was slashed, the tempo increasing as the drummers' bodies bent further forward toward the center of the circle… he saw the ecstatic face as an arm was raised to the mouth and the swift tongue began to lick the blood in rhythm" (*Let It Come Down* 270). In 1973, the anthropologist Vincent Capranzano published *The Hamadsha: A Study in Moroccan Ethnopsychiatry*, demonstrating that the ethnographic interest for the religious brotherhoods had not disappeared.

Fanon noticed how in the context of the struggle for independence, people involved in the process tended to abandon these practices, giving way to the repressed violence. That is why people in the cities were the first to criticize these rituals, as Bowles also noticed in his essay "Africa Minor." Bowles, however, offered a different explanation. For him, their abandonment was a matter of modernization and assimilation with the colonizer. Colonial systems encouraged the cult of the saints and the religious brotherhoods for their own benefit, as Bowles pointed out, "for their political ends, to ensure more complete domination" (*Collected Stories* 724). In "Things Gone and Things Still Here," he denounces that the brotherhood of the Haddaoua has been "painstakingly eradicated by the authorities" (*Collected Stories* 478).

In the short story "The Wind at Beni Midar," the Jilala have an important presence. Its members are defined as men from the mountain who danced and left blood on the floor, although no one made attempt to stop them: "A Djilali can do only what the music tells him to do. When the musicians, who are Djilala too, play the music that has the power, his eyes shut and he falls on the floor. And until the man has shown the proof and drunk his own blood, the musicians do not begin the music that will bring him back to the world" (*Collected Stories* 264). The core of the story "The Wind at Beni Midar" is the conflict between popular belief or superstition, and "modern" thinking. Driss is a soldier that despises manifestations such as Jilala rituals, and thinks the government should eradicate such superstitions. His superior agrees and argues that when all the children are schooled there would be no more *jnūn*, women would stop putting spells on their husbands and the Djilala and Hamadsha would stop cutting themselves. But one day Driss has too much *kif*, he loses his rifle and, not finding a better explanation, he blames a *jinn*. His superior is outraged, he thought Driss had a better sense, and decides to play a trick on him to teach him a lesson: he convinces him the only solution to find the weapon is to ask a Jilali in

trance, and then places the gun Driss forgot among the trees while he was high on *kif* in his bed. When Driss learns he has been the victim of a trick, he decides to punish his superior, and goes to see a witch who prepares some powder for him. Then Driss pours the powder into his superior's drink. As a result, the soldier's soul is "torn out of his body" and his power "truly broken," and has to be taken to some health institution (*Collected Stories* 274). Initially, Driss impersonates the new nationalist: a Moroccan that believes in the institutions, in the religious heterodoxy, and despises superstition. When lacking a better answer, he involuntarily turns to superstition, undergoing what we may call a cultural lapse. Wit overcomes superstition when his superior answers applying reason, tricking him into believing there was a supernatural solution for the loss of the rifle. But, surprisingly, when Driss learns he has been taken for a fool, he does not rely on reason to punish his superior, but again turns to superstition and gets a magic powder from a local witch. It seems that Bowles is trying to emphasize that primitive mentality underlies beneath the rational surface, even in those who despise popular belief. At the same time, he presents us with characters that react differently towards magic and belief. Whether they believe in these supernatural elements or not, some of them use superstition in their own benefit, knowing the effects it has in on other people. Bowles denied that the marvelous or the mystical had any presence in his writings: "'mysticism' smells of sandalwood and regressive fanaticism," he would declare in an interview (*Conversations* 143). He was exploring the effects of believing in supernatural phenomena, the works of the primitive mind, while showing at the same time that there were natives working outside this apparatus that took advantage of their superstitious fellows.

Bowles's interest in brotherhoods can also be related to his exploration of the unconsciousness in his works and to his interest in the workings of the primitive mentality. When asked by the magazine *Rolling Stone* in 1979 if he believed that the member of the

brotherhoods did not show any trace of injuries after a violent performance, he replied that he did[84]. He explained the phenomenon as follows: "They just have a very different kind of consciousness than ours, I think. There are those who are able to […] leave themselves behind, go out of the house, and leave the door open so their saint can get in and take over" *Conversations* 106). Bowles believed that these performers had the ability to transcend their bodies and become possessed by the saint they venerated. This ability to go beyond was circumscribed to believers: "I don't think we can possibly experience it. It's not really possible to derive any spiritual belief or healing benefits from contacts with the brotherhoods without having been brought up a devout Muslim" (*Conversations* 106), he explained, showing a respectful attitude towards this cultural practice. On his fiction, however, characters might try to enter these trances, like Dyar in *Let It Come Down*, when watching a Hamadsha performance: "It was too far beyond the verge of the possible… in his mind he has moved forward from looking on to a kind of participation… the mutilation was being done for him, to him… the man was dancing to purify all who watched" (*Let It Come Down* 270-271). In fiction, the performances of the religious brotherhoods were another tool to reach the dissolution of the self, like Port's death experience and Kit's madness.

3.2.3.5. *Baraka*

Baraka is defined by Clifford Geertz as "blessing, in the sense of divine favour" (*Islam Observed* 44). It is a quality attributed to saints, descendants of the Prophet, even members of brotherhoods, and places and objects associated to them. Those close to these people, places and object are blessed by proximity. *Baraka* might cure an illness, secure protection or simply bring good luck. According to Geertz, it is also associated with

[84] In the novel by Mohammed Mrabet *Chocolate Creams and Dollars* (1992) we find a similar description of ritual dance (47-50).

magical power.

In the short story "The Empty Amulet" (1981), Bowles explores again the thin line between belief and superstition. Like in "The Wind at Beni Midar," Bowles faces two antagonistic characters: Moroccan man with "modern ideas" and his traditional wife. The woman, allegedly ill, visits the tomb of Sidi Larbi, a local saint, to partake of his *baraka* and find relief. She starts going on pilgrimages frequently to relieve herself from her imaginary ailments. When her husband, who works in a hospital and believes in modern medicine, learns that her pregnant wife is drinking dirt of the saint's tomb diluted in water, he thinks of a solution to trick her into interrupting her pilgrimages. He crumbles a couple of smoking papers and goes to a goldsmith to make "a tiny gold cage just big enough to hold a baraka" (*Collected Stories* 574). The wife prizes the gift above everything else and stops her pilgrimages, until one day she accidentally breaks the amulet and discovers the deceit. She blames her husband for depriving her of any *baraka* and, for the first time, she falls truly ill.

Make-believe is a powerful instrument: Habiba is not initially ill; she thinks she is because her friends are always discussing ailments and remedies. She is cured of her fake maladies by a false talisman, but falls truly ill when she learns of the deception. Bowles is not discussing the existence and effects of *baraka* in the dirt of the saint's tomb or in the talismans; he is simply reproducing the effects of these traditional beliefs in the primitive mentality. This mentality is responsible for the wellness and the illness of the woman of the story. In any case, his reproduction of the uses and effects of *baraka* seems accurate: Westermarck also mentions that charms containing some passage of the Koran are used as talismans in Morocco as protection from the evil eye, from *jnūn*, or as a remedy from illnesses (1:210-211).

I will retake the notion of *baraka* in the next pages, when analyzing *The Spider's House.*

3.3. Mocking the method: "A Distant Episode" as a satiric portrait of the ethnographer

Bowles did not only use ethnographic elements to enrich his short fiction or to preserve them. The short story "A Distant Episode" (1948) can be read as a full satire of the useless role of ethnographic knowledge –in this case, linguistics— when confronted against the wilderness of the desert and the ruthless violence of the native interlocutors. Scholars have frequently quoted this short story as the perfect example of Bowles's "brutality and exotic violence."[85] In it, Bowles narrates the story of an unnamed linguist that goes to the fictitious town Aïn Tadouirt in the Sahara to research on some of the local variations of Moghrebi. Once there he tries to reacquaint the owner of a café who had ostensibly offered to help him with the survey. In the café the *qaouaji* (tea maker) explains that the old owner had died. When the professor asks the *qaouaji* where to find some camel-udder boxes and offers him money to provide them, he leads him through the desert night and then into the hands of the Reguibat. The tribesmen torture the Professor and he has his tongue removed. Without his tongue, the linguistics professor also loses his wits and his ability to communicate or to understand any language. Then the Reguibat train him to be their personal jester and he becomes a precious possession for the tribesmen and a year passes. He is finally sold in a town and manages to escape after the new owner kills a Reguiba for cheating him. In the final paragraph, he crosses a French soldier and runs into the desert. The soldier shoots and misses him on purpose taking him for a holy maniac, then watches how he disappears over the horizon.

[85] Barry Tharaud, "Culture and Existence in Bowles's Short Fiction," 105. See also Wayne Pounds' *Paul Bowles: The Inner Geography*, New York: Peter Lang, 1985. "First, the typical pattern of self-division in Bowles's characters is presented as a predatory animal-like violence beneath a compliant behavioral shell that represents the self's outer acquiescence to the demands of the parents, biological or internalized" (30).

From the first paragraph, the author seems to mock the method of ethnographic research: "Ten years ago he had been in the village for three days" (*Collected Stories* 210). Those three days in the fieldwork were enough for him to find a local interlocutor and establish a "fairly firm friendship" (210) with whom he maintained correspondence for a year. In the story, everyone seems to know more than the scholarly expert does. When he asks the *qaouaji* in the Arabic "that he had taken four years to learn," the man scornfully answers in "bad French" (211), as if he despised the man's learning. Immediately, the Professor tries to display his local expertise by asking him about the camel-udder boxes made by the Reguibat, only to look like as a tourist looking for exotic souvenirs. Then, when he decides to accompany the *qaouaji* to look for the boxes, he tries to employ his Western logic to banish his fears, thinking that the man most likely would not cut his throat because "he would surely be found out" (212). Even as he is being tortured, he uses the Western logic to resist considering he is in real danger, and thinks "these people are not primitives" (215) and "I refuse to die this way" (216). His attitude borders on ridicule when he finds that, besides torture, he is having "an opportunity […] of testing the accuracy" (216-217) of different statements referring the Reguibat, a difficult subject of study for the Oriental experts due to their tendency to avoid towns. The same happens when he has his tongue amputated; he interprets what is happening to him looking for a Western correlative: "The word 'operation' kept going through his mind" (218). After that, "the Professor did not begin to think again." Devoid of his Western mind, he becomes an empty vessel and then his grotesque re-education begins. A year goes by and the Professor is a subhuman creature. In fact, he does not reacts until he hears some words in Arabic and he reads some words in a French calendar that finally start to mean things, to make "sounds in his head" (*Collected Stories* 221).

The very title of the story hints that the narrative is not to be taken as a real event or

an important truth, it is an episode that could or could not have happened back in time, in a fictitious town. The fact that the Professor does not have a name strengthens the idea that he is just an example, a character in a parable about something else. The story, even though is a clear example of the "self's undoing" mentioned by Papayanis,[86] it is also an allegory of something else. For Timothy Weiss, "A Distant Episode" is "a parable of Western vulnerability and incomprehension."[87] I would like to add that it is also a parable of Western inability to grasp the Other and an allegory of the uselessness of Western values, mindset and learning in a foreign environment. The Professor arrives with knowledge, reputation and money, but these elements are not enough for gaining authority or even for surviving in the Saharan territory. In this sense, the Orient that it represents cannot be domesticated, exoticized or collected for Western examination, becoming an Orient that resists traditional Orientalism. Even though it could be considered an unfair portrait of the Orientals, we have to remember that the French soldier, representative of the Western authority, shoots the Professor mistaking him for a local "holy maniac." In the moral of this parable, all humans have the ability to be cruel with the other.

3.4. *The Spider's House* as a compendium of ethnographic knowledge

No other novel within the corpus of Paul Bowles's writings explores so deeply the troublesome relationship between the Self and the Other, the Westerner and the primitive subject like *The Spider's House* (1955).

Set in Fez in 1954 during the independent turmoil, the novel portrays the city in the last days of French colonial rule, immediately prior to Morocco's gaining independence in 1956. Critics soon noticed that Bowles was departing from his usual themes in his new novel, for he was dealing with a contemporary subject. Critic Charles J. Rolo wrote in *The*

[86] *Writing in the Margins*, 140.
[87] *Translating Orients*, 56. For Weiss, in this short story the Orient is a "world beyond," completely uninvolved with Western ways of knowledge and being.

New York Times Book Review: "In *The Spider's House* the main protagonists are not ciphers and they are caught up in contemporary realities—the conflict between the French and the Arabs in Morocco."[88] Bowles wrote it in the city of Fez in 1954, but he did not intend to produce a political novel at first. In the prologue of the 1981 edition, Bowles explained his intentions: "I wanted to write a novel using as backdrop the traditional daily life of Fez, because it was a medieval city functioning in the twentieth century […] even as I started to write, events that could not be ignored had begun to occur there […] I was going to have to write […] about its dissolution" (*The Spider's House* ix). There is an implicit elegiac tone: the author is responsible for capturing the last days of the traditional life of Fez. This does not mean that Bowles regretted the end of the colonial era; he even explains that he had been looking forward to seeing the end of French rule. But he had underestimated the Moroccan nationalists: "Ingenuously I had imagined that after the Independence the old manner of life would be resumed and the country would return to being more or less what it had been before the French presence […] The Nationalists were not interested in ridding Morocco of all traces of European civilization and restoring it to its pre-colonial state; on the contrary, their aim was to make it even more 'European' than the French had made it" (ix-x). His suspicions that the nationalist agenda did not plan to preserve the Morocco that was but to produce a modernized Morocco were confirmed and his travel writings and stories acquired a nostalgic tone, as we have seen in chapter 2.4[89] and in the short stories included in *Things Gone and Things Still Here.*

From the beginning, we see a narrator at a crossroads, trying to capture a city in the moment of its dissolution, a city in conflict where he would try to represent both sides of the struggle: "I was embroiled in the controversy, at the same time finding it impossible to

[88] *The New York Times*, November 6, 1955. <https://www.nytimes.com/books/98/05/17/specials/bowles-spider.html>
[89] See pages 33, 44, 47-48.

adopt either side's point of view" (*The Spider's House* x). The role that suited him best was, again, that of the observer, the invisible spectator, who adopted now ethnographic connotations in his attempt to preserve the city for posterity as a cultural artifact.

This in-betweenness, this incapacity to adopt a distinctive point of view is transferred to the novel by means of taking different points of view in each section. The novel is divided into four sections. Book 1, "The Master of Wisdom," and Book 2, "Sins Are Finished," are narrated from the point of view of Amar, a fifteen-year old Moroccan. Book 3, "The Hour of the Shallows," is dedicated to John Stenham, the other main character in the novel, an expatriate American writer, already introduced in the Prologue, and Lee Burroughs, the pretty American traveler. Amar and Stenham meet in Book 3 and the complete Book 4, "The Ascending Stairways," is dedicated to their relationship.

The novel presents the different factions in Fez at the time: the hated French colonialists who maintain a puppet monarch on the throne; the nationalists of the Istiqlal party and their hunger for power; the devoted Moslems who impersonate the Islamic and folk heritage. Young Amar is the son of a *cherif* and has the gift of the *baraka*, or spiritual healing power. Stenham is a *connoisseur* of the country, its language and its customs, and regrets that the nationalist struggle is going to end the old ways. Lee Burroughs is restlessly seeking something in Morocco when she meets Stenham. Amar has been secluded in his traditional way of life until he meets Stenham and Lee, and they start a relationship in which cultural misunderstanding is the rule. When violence erupts, the Americans escape with Amar the city violence and attend a pilgrimage to a local celebration. Back in Fez, Amar is caught in the middle of a political plot and turns to Stenham and Lee, hoping they would help him to get out of town, but they refuse, leaving him in the middle of an empty road.

Critics agree that John Stenham has more in common with Bowles than any other

protagonist.[90] He is an exiled writer, he has been living in the country for years, he speaks fluent Moroccan Arabic, he finds himself at ease with his native friends, he knows the culture and rites of the foreign country, he despises changes, tourists, and the Westernization of old ways of life. In short, he is the cultivated outsider in an alien society he presumes to know. Stenham embodies the main figure of modernity, the *flâneur*, an aristocratic figure that stands out "against the democratization of travel" (Hulme and Youngs 7). In the Prologue, Stenham reflects upon the Moroccan friends he just had dinner with. In a couple of pages, he portrays himself as the entitled traveler, who analyses the primitives as readable pieces of information. He, like Bowles, considers them actors, players in a game, performing some kind of "comedy" (*The Spider's House* 4) and "lengthy and elaborate" goodbyes that he enjoyed "because it was a part of what he thought life in a medieval city should be like" (4). When the guide who is accompanying him home takes him through a different route, he thinks: "How these people love games […] This one's playing cops and robbers now" (5). The distance between the Same and the Other is vast, they are "far, far away from us," a riddle when they present themselves to Westerners, who "haven't an inkling of the things that motivate them" (6). He feels superior to other Westerners, more entitled to explain them, although he cannot consider himself a true insider: "The mere fact that he could then even begin to hint at the beliefs and purposes that lay on the far side made him feel more sure of his own attempts at analyzing them and gave him a small sense of superiority to which he felt he was entitled, in return for having withstood the rigors of Morocco for so many years" (6). With his informed opinion, he wanted to convince other Westerners of the "unbridgeable gulf" (6) between them, but he secretly thought Moroccans were not so different, that their dissimilarities "were largely those of ritual and gesture" (6). Stenham tries to fit in the category of the knowing resident,

[90] See Caponi, 182, Hamdaoui, 77, Suver, 42.

but he is partaking of the Orientalist conventions of the European travelers I have analyzed in the Appendix: for him, living in Fez equates to embarking on a time travel and he tries to read the locals as knowable pieces of information, passive actors in a drama performed for him, and finally, he tries to accumulate knowledge, to go beyond the basic notions others have, as if he were compiling quantifying information to produce a unique ethnographic atlas of Moroccan behavior and Moroccan customs.

What Stenham prices above everything else in Fez and its inhabitants is its purity. The independent uprising is threatening that way of life, something that the French were not able to accomplish: "When I first came here it was a pure country. There was music and dancing and magic every day in the streets. Now it's finished, everything. Even the religion. In a few more years the whole country will be like all the other Moslem countries, just a huge European slum" (187-8). And what is purity for Stenham? Purity is merely an aesthetic divertimento, some plain scenery where the native actors perform their dramas. He reflects that, even if his Moroccan friend Si Jaffar and his sons were French supporters, that fact "still did not invalidate their purity in his eyes, so long as they continued to live the way they lived: sitting on the floor, eating with their fingers, cooking and sleeping first in one room, then in another, or in the vast patio with its fountains, or on the roof, leading the existence of nomads inside the beautiful shell which was the House" (216-217).

But I suspect that Bowles somehow mocks Stenham's concern with cultural purity. When he is asked if he would like to have some wine with his food, he always refuses to drink maintaining that he is "puristic" and cannot contemplate having wine with Arab food (162), because of the Islamic prohibition of alcohol. Besides an aesthetic enjoyment attached to the old ways, purity can also be consumed as any other experience. Whereas Stenham worries about the end of an ancient civilization, his ways of experiencing such civilization can be considered quite superficial. As critic Greg Mullins argues, Stenham is

struck by a severe case of colonial nostalgia (Mullins 33). He longs for a time before colonialism. Fez becomes "a black screen upon which Stenham projects his desires. The city is neither an object nor a site of desire but rather the representation of a style in which Stenham seeks his pleasure" (Mullins 35). As Mullins acutely points out, Stenham and Lee represent a "discursive shift" from colonialism to neo-colonialism: they both see Moroccans as an abstract entity, deprived of individuality, turning from ·a discourse of civilization versus barbarity to one of development versus underdevelopment" (Mullins 35)

When Stenham meets Amar, he is attracted by his purity, but the first thing that triggers his curiosity for the boy is that Amar does not fit in his own atlas of oriental behavior. "I've watched them for years. I know what they're like" (215), he assures Lee in the café where they see Amar for the first time. Then Amar jumps into a shallow pool to help an insect that has fallen into the water. This action cannot be interpreted or analyzed by Stenham's expert eye:

> "'Now, that was a strange bit of behavior. The boy made a special trip into the water just to pull out some kind of insect.'
> 'Well, he's kind-hearted.'
> 'I know, but they're not. That's the whole point. In all my time here I've never seen anyone do a thing like that.'"
>
> (*The Spider's House* 215)

Amar is the piece in the puzzle that does not fit into Stenham's categories. He resists becoming a readable object, a part of whole. He is the riddle the oriental expert has not deciphered yet.

For Stenham, Amar is the real thing, the last remnant of purity of a crumbling down culture. This time, the purity is not only an exterior adornment, but also something related to values and behavior:

> "To him the boy was a perfect symbol of human backwardness, and excited his praise precisely because he was 'pure': there was no room in his personality for anything that mankind had not already fully developed long ago. To him he was a consolation, a living proof that today's triumph was not yet total; he personified Stenham's

infantile hope that time might still be halted and man sent back to his origins."
(*The Spider's House* 345)

Stenham sees in Amar a relic of the past, a protonative, an endangered species. "This boy sees an untainted world," he explains to Lee (326). Stenham is nothing but an amateur anthropologist who assumes that cultures are unmoving. In short, Amar is also the Other in danger of extinction (Caponi 183). For Papayanis, Bowles's use of "an illiterate youth to represent traditional Morocco reinforces the Romantic (and antimodern) view of traditional culture as the embodiment of prelapsarian innocence" (Papayanis 193).

Like Stenham, Bowles met an extraordinary young man in Fez in 1947. His name was Ahmed Yacoubi, he was sixteen and, like Amar, he was a *cherif*, that is, a direct descent of the prophet Muhammad. Bowles was really intrigued by him; he did not speak French nor Spanish, but a Berber dialect of his region, and somehow managed to communicate with Bowles with gestures, facial expressions and some words in the Moroccan dialect. His education had consisted mostly of learning the legends, songs, and dances of his region and paraphrasing the Koran (Spencer Carr 194-195). Bowles stated to his biographer Virginia Spencer Carr that he was determined to know him better because "He was primitive, and his reactions where those of a primitive. That was what fascinated me. I don't think I'd ever know anyone so primitive, and when we became better acquainted, I encouraged him not to lose that quality" (195). Bowles introduced Yacoubi to his wife Jane, who first got Yacoubi to use paint and later took his works to New York to be exhibited in a gallery of a friend. "By the time he was twenty-one, Yacoubi was Morocco's best-known contemporary artist" (Spencer Carr 196).

It is not clear when Bowles began his affair with Yacoubi, but it seems that they were together by 1949 and their relationship lasted almost a decade. He told about his obsession with the young *cherif* to Virginia Spencer Carr in a letter in 1997: "As much as I was capable of loving anyone, I loved Yacoubi with an intense passion heretofore unknown

to me. With Yacoubi, it was never 'just sex'" (Spencer Carr 201). As Greg Mullins argues in *Colonial Affairs*, *The Spider's House* bears traces of Bowles's relationship with the adult Yacoubi and that the author began writing the novel when they were living together in 1954 (Mullins 41).

The scene in the café when Stenham, Lee, and Amar first met is also narrated from Amar's point of view. It is interesting to see how to Amar's eyes, Stenham and Lee do not fit his preconceptions about Westerners: Amar initially thinks Lee is a prostitute "of the lowest order" because she shows her arms and cleavage, smokes and sits alone with a man at the café. But a detail catches his attention: the man speaks Arabic, "Now Amar looked closely at the man, decided he was not French, and felt the wave of hatred that had been on its way recede, leaving a residue of disappointment and indifference tinged with curiosity" (*The Spider's House* 136). He is disappointed because he is not capable of knowing him at first sight, but his curiosity, like Stenham's, is aroused. Later, when he decides they are not French, he stops despising them but dismisses them as "tourists," the only category he knows besides the French colonialists.

Besides, both Amar and Stenham face similar personal challenges. Both are liminal subjects in their own cultural background: Stenham is neither a colonialist nor a usual expatriate. He is mainly a passive observer who refuses to face reality: "He did not want the French to keep Morocco, nor did he want to see the Nationalists take it. He could not choose sides because the part of his consciousness which dealt with the choosing of sides had long ago been paralyzed by having chosen that which was designed to suspend all possibility of choice" (*The Spider's House* 342).

But Amar cannot choose sides either: he knows that the world his father represents, the world of tradition and religion, is doomed to disappear, but cannot feel identified with the nationalist cause of the Istiqlal party. The subject of Book 1 becomes the clash tearing

apart the Moroccan society embodied by Amar: a clash between a new order (represented by the members of the Istiqlal and their sympathizers) and the old one (represented by Amar's father, other *chorfa* and followers of the traditional ways). Amar is somehow caught in the middle; his intuition leads him to believe that his father's world is no longer sustainable, but experience turns his sympathies against the Istiqlal method. His is a world of imagination: "'He [his father] doesn't know what the world is like today.' The thought that his own conception of the world was so different from his father's was like a protecting wall against his entire being […] when Amar stepped out the door there was the whole vast earth waiting, the live, mysterious earth, that belonged to him in a way it could belong to no one else, and where anything at all might happen" (29). For critic Marilyn Adler Papayanis, Amar is the perfect example of Bowlesian Other, "already cut adrift of his or her own unresolved cultural or historical trajectory" (Papayanis 140), an individual living on the margins. After leaving the realm of innocence at his father's house, Amar enters the world of experience and becomes an unwilling outsider in his own city: "Where there was a crowd, that was where he wanted to be […] it would have embarrassed him to open his mouth and shout or sing along with them. It was part of his nature to push his way to the inside and yet at the last moment to remain on the outside" (*The Spider's House* 131).

Amar and Stenham are, since their first encounter, mirror images: in the café, Stenham watches the boy while the boy watches the insect he was saved from the pool, whereas Amar watches Stenham while he watches Lee, his sexual prize. Both are curious of each other, neither of them fit in their preconceived categories. From their encounter also stems one of the main themes in the novel: the gap in understanding between cultures. In no other work does Bowles explore the recognition between the expatriate and the native like in *The Spider's House.* But they also resemble each other as liminal figures, stranded

from their cultural milieu; they meet in the respective margins of their clashing systems. When the forlorn expatriate meets the young misfit, they create an unexpected and fragile friendship. The fragility of this recognition is the fragility of the spider's house; an artifact built hastily that can disappear in the blink of an eye. They remain mirror images until the end of the novel, when reality takes over: Stenham remains the observant outsider, Amar the victim of the clash between the two worlds. There cannot be any recognition between two colliding cultures. In his youth, he is the innocent who takes the blame for trusting the Other, the abandoned animal in the middle of the road. As Elleke Boehmer states, cultural recognition is hard to accomplish: "cultures are not always mutually intelligible. Obscurities and silences will exist no matter how much research is devoted to the task of making lucid what is dim" (Boehmer 274).

Even as a failure, the encounter between Amar and Stenham leaves an important testimony of intercultural relations. For Brian T. Edwards, *The Spider's House* is the only novel that truly opens to Maghrebi voices and subjectivities (*Morocco Bound* 115). Amar becomes the first Other in Bowles's fiction to acquire the status of protagonist. His change throughout the novel is as important as Stenham's. As we have seen in *The Sheltering Sky* and many short stories, transformation is one of the most important themes in Paul Bowles's writing (Caponi 213). For Gena Dagel Caponi, *The Spider's House* is Bowles's most complete exploration of the "savage mind" from the inside, "a rare attempt in Western literature to see the world through the eyes of the other" (*Paul Bowles, Romantic Savage* 184). Postcolonial criticism might argue that Bowles was not entitled to speak for the subaltern. In her essay "Can the Subaltern Speak?" (1988) Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak maintains that even the most altruistic efforts to talk about the Other can be a way of silencing the Other's voice. At the end, the risk of misinterpreting other cultures is bigger than the possibility of presenting a fair picture, specially when the interpretation is a one-

way road, as Aimé Cesáire succinctly declared: "It is the West that studies the ethnography of others, not the others who study the ethnography of the West" (*Discourse on Colonialism* 71). But, as Judith Butler has argued, even though the representation of the subaltern will not be easy, it is still possible.[91] For Butler, the main obstacle is that, at the site of the subaltern, "there is no 'other' […] but an array of peoples who cannot be homogenized, or whose homogenization is the effect of the epistemic violence itself" (Butler 37). The Other cannot be homogenized, otherwise the First World intellectual would be adopting a position of hegemony. In *The Wretched of the Earth*, Franz Fanon advised the colonized to mistrust the intellectuals, drawing a framework which might suit Stenham easily: "He sets a high value on the customs, traditions, and the appearances of his people; but his inevitable, painful experience only seems to be a banal search for exoticism" (*The Wretched of the Earth* 221).

But, what if the intellectual gives voice to a single subaltern? Would he still be making attempts to homogenize the Other? Would it be another trick in his banal search for exoticism? In my opinion, Bowles was re-enacting a double approach in *The Spider's House*: on the one hand there is a hegemonic position, embodied by Stenham's opinions and views, his personal atlas of knowledge, that tend to homogenize Moroccan culture as a fixed entity. On the other hand, there is a subaltern individual voice incorporated by the character of Amar. The only time in which Stenham sees how his hegemonic position falters is when he realizes Amar does not fit in his cultural atlas of Moroccans:

> "In the beginning the Moroccans had been for him an objective force, unrelieved and monolithic. All of them put together made a thing, an element both less and more than human; but any one of them alone existed only insofar as he was an anonymous part or a recognizable symbol of that indivisible and undifferentiable total. They were something almost as basic as the sun or the wind, subject to no moods or impulses started by the mirror of the intellect. They did not know they were there; they merely were there, at one with existence. Nothing could be the result of one individual's desire, since one was the equivalent of another. Whatever they were and whatever

[91] *Contingency, Hegemony, Universality: Contemporary Dialogues on the Left,* 37.

> came about was what they all desired. But now, perhaps as a result of having seen this boy, he found himself beginning to doubt the correctness of his whole theoretical edifice."
>
> (*The Spider's House* 335)

Thanks to Amar, Stenham realizes he has been objectifying the Other the whole time. However, even if meeting Amar changes Stenham's views, it seems that he does not seize the opportunity to built a non-hegemonic relationship with the Other, leaving Amar to his fate in the end. In addition, Stenham, who embodies the Western intellectual, seems powerless to face this new reality: if Amar is different and does not adhere to his theoretical hegemonic perspective, there can be others like him. This would mean Moroccans were "much like anyone else," and that the destruction of their culture would be irrelevant (336). His role as observer, as anthropologist, would be meaningless after failing to point out the singularities within Moroccan culture, a failure so overwhelming that "he could not allow himself to consider" (337). Exposed to his own contradictions, Stenham becomes a hollow man, unable to reconcile his preconceptions with his intercultural experiences and to articulate a cross-cultural relationship based on mutual understanding.

For Caponi, through the character of Amar, "Bowles quietly explores what Western civilization has lost in the process of discarding earlier beliefs. Amar signifies the pre-Westernized citizen, at peace with himself, possessed of a sense of place and self that comes from feeling secure in his culture and in his religion" (*Paul Bowles: Romantic Savage* 184). Moral individuality is meaningless in such a context. That would answer Stenham's question: "What have we got in us that responds to such a city?" (*The Spider's House* 179). Stenham, like Chateaubriand, thinks the knowledge of other peoples has as a result a better knowledge the self. Defined as the "inventor of voyage," Chateaubriand advocated for the preservation of intercultural differences.[92] But this is a naïve enterprise, as Edward Said points out, because the imperial setting and background "it is the true

[92] Tzvetan Todorov, *Nous et les autres*, 324.

defining horizon, and to some extent, the enabling condition of such otherwise abstract and groundless concepts like "otherness" and "difference" ("Representing the Colonized" 307). In *The Spider's House*, Bowles could have been trying to apprehend the imperial context from the perspective of the Other, at least at the level of fiction, however limited. At the same time, he was participating of the fetishization (perhaps not celebration) of difference.

To try to elucidate Bowles's position towards Moroccan culture and his role as a cultural ethnographer, I will now analyze the presence and the treatment of native cultural elements in *The Spider's House*. I will start with the language used.

In *The Spider's House*, the communication between the main characters, Amar and Stenham, takes place in *darija*, the Arabic dialect spoken in Morocco, often known as Moroccan Arabic or even Moghrebi (even though their conversations are "translated" into English by the author). Amar does not know any French, whereas Stenham, unlike the rest of Bowles's main characters in the previous novels, is highly fluent in Moroccan Arabic. Their relationship is based on *darija*, while the other intercultural pairs in the novels of Paul Bowles did not speak the local language: Kit and Belqassim in *The Sheltering Sky* resorted to mimicry and Dyar and Thami in *Let It Come Down* carried their conversations in English. In this sense, *The Spider's House* can be considered the more "Moroccan" of the group, especially if we consider that the plot develops in the middle of the independent uprising in Fez and the exploration of the cross-cultural encounter is a key theme.

It is not surprising that there is a shift from communicating in colonial languages to the native *darija*. Greg Mullins has suggested that the shift in the novel's point of view can respond to a "crack in the façade of colonial discourse, a way of not bridging in the difference between colonizer and colonized but of conceiving this encounter in entirely different terms" (Mullins 33). This "crack" is also conveyed through the language used. On the occasions in which the communication between Stenham and Amar becomes difficult,

language also stands as a barrier. On their first encounter, Stenham asks Amar: "'*Qu'est-ce qui se passe dehors?*' The boy stared at him, uncomprehending. So he was a Moroccan, after all. '*Smahili*,' Stenham said. '*Chnou hadek el haraj?*'" (*The Spider's House* 253). For Stenham, a nostalgic afraid that the old way of living is quickly fading, the fact that Amar does not speak the colonial language is another symbol of purity; after all, he is a true Moroccan, not so colonized as the rest. When Stenham is requested to abandon Fez by the police, the conversation runs as follows: "He turned to the taller Moslem, and said to him in Arabic: "Why? What's happened?" The other looked first surprised and then pained, to hear his own tongue being spoken. With dignity he replied in French" (226). Here, language use indicates that the native speaker tries to maintain the colonial discourse; surprise and pain are the reactions of the colonized that does not want to feel sympathy for an individual that represents the colonizer. The independence is coming, so the time of possible friendship and mutual understanding has faded away, "For the people in the street the enemy is the non-Moslem" (*The Spider's House* 227). The proud answer in French is the reply of someone overwhelmed by what Albert Memmi called the "tortures of colonial bilingualism" (Memmi 106).

For Amar, trust is built upon language. When he meets Moulay Ali, a member of the Istiqlal party that recruits boys for the cause, he is appealed by his way of speaking, mixing Moroccan Arabic and classic Arabic: "Amar had never heard his own tongue spoken quite in this way before: the man used all the local expressions, but at the same time he interspersed his sentences with words that showed that he knew true Arabic, the language of the mosque and the *medersa*, the *imam* and the *aalem*. And the manner in which he mixed the two languages was so skillful that its result sounded almost like a new tongue, easy and sweet to the ear" (*The Spider's House* 77).

Baraka is a cultural trope very present throughout the novel, as well as in the short

fiction, as we have seen in chapter 3.2.3.5. Amar's father, Si Jaffar, is a Cherif (*Shariff*), which is the name given to families related to the Prophet's line. The Cherif is not a saint, he is rather a person who deserves respect. The Chorfa (plural of Cherif) are usually healers, community leaders, experts on religion and law, and are inevitably imbued with *baraka*. This is how Bowles describes it through the eyes of Amar: "If someone were ill, or in trance, or had been entered by some foreign spirit, even Amar often could set him right, by touching him with his hand and murmuring a prayer. And in his family the baraka was very strong, so powerful that in each generation one man had always made healing his profession. Neither his father nor his grandfather had ever done any work save that of attending to the constant stream of people who came to be treated by them" (*The Spider's House* 19).

Bowles shows an important ethnographic knowledge regarding *baraka*. Edward Westermarck, who devoted the longest section in his compilation of ritual and beliefs to this credence, defines it almost in the same terms: *baraka* (literally "blessing") is used in Morocco, and in many other Islamic countries as well, to denote a "mysterious wonder-working force which is looked upon as a blessing from God" (1:35). Persons imbued with exceptional *baraka* are saints, and the places they have inhabited and their tombs also have *baraka*. A person might partake of the saint's "blessing" by pilgrimaging to those places (Westermarck 1:65), a custom registered by Bowles in the short story "The Waters of Izli" (1977) with the shrine of Sidi Bouhajja. But no man possessed more baraka than the prophet Muhammad, and it was then transmitted to his descendants, the Chorfa (*šūrfa*). Westermarck points out that in Fez, Chorfa frequently acted as doctors who healed by reading incantations, spitting into their wounds or simply touching them, like Amar and his father in *The Spider's House*.

Besides, Amar knows how to manipulate other's people credulity regarding these

beliefs, like some of the characters in the short stories. For instance, he takes advantage of the usual respect people have for those who bear *baraka*. His first employer, a potter, does not believe he is a Cherif when Amar tells him, but when he finds out, he decides to treat him better, just in case, because "If Allah were involved it would be safer to be generous" (43). Amar convinces him to double his wages, and the man accepts, partly because he seeks divine favor, and partly because sales are rising thanks to Amar.

Anthropologist Clifford Geertz adds another dimension to the definition of *baraka*, calling it "personal presence, force of character, moral vividness" (*Islam Observed* 44). Westermarck also relates it to a certain "feeling of wonder" (1:146). Besides of his healing powers, Amar also exhibits an important force of character and a solid moral compass, inherited by his father's teachings. Moreover, all these attributes correspond to an individual with charisma, an individual who stands out from the rest, a worth-knowing Moroccan, according to Stenham.

But Amar is not only special because of his inherited *baraka.* He knows he is different from everyone else, he has a "secret" he does not share with anyone, "powers that no one else possessed" (19). The narrator defines this quality as follows: "He had discovered that a hundred times a day things came into his head that never seemed to come into anyone else's head" (*The Spider's House* 19). In short, Amar has the power to evoke fantasies, to use his imagination to recreate situations. It also implies the ability to enjoy certain *joie de vivre* when he is in contact with nature or admiring the city, eliciting the "feeling of wonder" Westermarck alluded to.

At the beginning of the third chapter in Section 1, we find a scene that recreates one of these fantasies based on the real world. It is a vivid monarch-of-all-I-survey scene that, as I mentioned in Section 2, is a common feature in exploration narratives, usually a promontory description characterized by a heroic perspective and a certain aestheticization

(Pratt 201). This scene begins with the nearest view from the terrace and ends up with an imaginary landscape:

> "Fog lay in the valley. A few of the higher minarets pushed up from the sea of grayness below like green fingers pointing skyward […] Beyond this [the city] were great mountains where the Berbers lived, and then desert, and other lands whose names only a few people could tell you, and then, of course, behind everything, in the center of the world, shining in an eternal unearthly light, there was Mecca […] Often at night he had stood in this very spot, his hands on the wall, straining his eyes as he peered into the star-filled darkness of the sky, trying to imagine that he saw at least a faint glimmer of the light which streamed up forever into the heavens from the sacred shrine [Mecca's]."
>
> (*The Spider's House* 33)

Imagination is what makes of Amar a liminal subject, placing him outside his paternal Islamic tradition and the revolutionary ways of the Istiqlal. And he adheres to his personality, refusing to change, even though he senses the male role models that surround him would like him to be otherwise: it is the case of the potter (52), his father (29) or Moulay Ali (367).

In fact, the awareness of being different empowers Amar, who knows he sees the world with the eyes of imagination. For Bowles, imagination is a prior condition to enjoy Moroccan cities like Tangier or Fez, only available to those with a certain dose of infantilism.[93] Imagination becomes a differentiating condition, a cognitive tool for interpreting the world, but also a tool for aesthetic enjoyment. The person who exerts his or her imagination, whereas he is native or foreign, is someone entitled to see the complex artifact the city represents.

Amar perceives in this differentiation a shielding device capable of protecting his individuality: "The thought that his own conception of the world was so different from his father's was like a protecting wall around his entire being. When his father went out into the street he had only the mosque, the Koran, the other old men in his mind. It was the

[93] See page 51.

immutable world of law, the written word, unchanging beneficence, but it was in some way wrinkled and dried up. Whereas when Amar stepped out the door there was the whole vast earth waiting, the live, mysterious earth, that belonged to him in a way it could belong to no one else, and where anything at all might happen (*The Spider's House* 28).

Most works of Paul Bowles deal with the opposition between shelter and exposure in some way or another. As I have written in the previous section, this opposition is very present in *The Sheltering Sky*, but we also find sheltering metaphors in *The Spider's House*. In this case, the sky is no longer sheltering, as it has "gone blue, hard and distant" (149). It is the architectural forms of the ancient medina that tells us about the disintegration of the traditional society: the walls are protective, the medina is a shelter. Stenham thinks of "beautiful shell which was the house" of his Moroccan friends (*The Spider's House* 217). According to Stenham's interpretation of native customs, "any building is a refuge," and Moroccans tend to seclude themselves in dark houses because "the world outside is hostile and dangerous" (*The Spider's House* 186). In fact, Amar's wanderings take him from one shelter to another: from his family home to the potter's workshop, from Moulay Ali's house (surrounded by the "hostile night") to Stenham's hotel. On the other side, Stenham, being a foreigner and finding difficulties in coping with his European acquaintances, sides with the outsiders in the conflict. That is the feeling that drives him towards Amar, and the reason why he feels at ease in the "outsideness" landscapes around the city, sharing Amar's love for aestheticized landscapes: "The silence of centuries was in here; no one ever entered but an occasional outlaw who did not fear the *djenoun* that inhabited such places. It was all these strange and lonely spots outside the walls, where the city-dwellers unanimously advised him not to walk, that he loved. Yet their beauty existed for him only to the degree that he was conscious of their outsideness, or that he could conjure up the sensation of compactness which the idea of the Medina gave him" (166).

Exteriors become a relief when the politic turmoil threatens the life in the medina. As Patteson has noticed, buildings cease to provide shelter in the moment the independent uprising: "What emerges from all this is a growing sense of vulnerability both of the old city and of the traditional life it embodies" (*A World Outside* 33). As Stenham reflects, "A few bombs would transform its delicate hand-molded walls into piles of white dust; it would no longer be the enchanted labyrinth sheltered from time […] When this city fell, the past would be finished" (*The Spider's House* 167).

At this point, rather than a shelter, the city becomes a trap. When Stenham, Lee and Amar set off to the countryside to attend the religious festival, they are escaping the trap to take refuge in unadulterated, "pure" culture. They do not attend the festival of a particular brotherhood, but rather a religious gathering dedicated to a local saint, Sidi Bou Chta (or Sîdi Bujîda). Again, Bowles makes use of his ethnographic background and creates a faithful recreation of one of these events. These festivals are called *mûsem* and they usually bring together several religious brotherhoods that dance and play in honor of the saint and partake of his *baraka*. In *Ritual and Belief*, Westermarck lists this particular *mûsem* among many others celebrated in Fez. The morning is dedicated to offerings and, in the afternoon, companies of Aissaoua, Hamadsha, the Jilala and the Guennaoua "come and entertain the people with their performances" (1:177).

At first, their enterprise acquires pastoral connotations. The people they encounter in their route to the religious festival are "beautiful […] clean and with radiant faces" (*The Spider's House* 309), as if they were the inhabitants of an *Arcadia felice* where the colonizers never have set foot. Even in their pristine status, they are nevertheless defined as a compact mass, indistinguishable from each other. Lee is the character most impressed by this idyllic vision. In general, Lee Burroughs is a character that acts as a counterpoint for Stenham. Less complex than him, Lee is an advocate of the independent cause because she

apparently thinks Moroccans deserve independence after suffering the colonizers and that it is natural they prefer the modern advances to a backward way of life. Her views on the natives are definitely narrow-minded, even though she claims to be egalitarian: "Lee was thinking: How white the French waiters look, and how dark the Moroccans […] The kid upstairs [referring to Amar], who'd never join any group, but would do anything at all if the right person gave the order" (282). At the same time, she embodies the nostalgic traveler and wants to witness Morocco in its last days of Oriental splendor and who wants to bring home as many "trophies" of her travel as possible (317). Under egalitarian pretenses, Lee hides mere racism. If she first contemplates Moroccans patronizingly, as an oppressed, simple people, when she faces the trance and violent rituals performed during the religious festival, her fear unfurls and the racism becomes evident. If in the countryside she has considered them clean and pure as "mountain streams, untouched regions" (311), her perception changes radically: "What she was looking down upon here tonight, the immense theatre full of human beings still unformed and unconscious, bathed in sweat, stamping and shrieking, falling into the dust and writhing and twitching and panting, all belonged unmistakably to the darkness, and therefore it had to be wholly outside her and she outside it. There could be no temporizing or mediation. It was down there, spread out before her, a segment of the original night" (314). Lee sees the Other as a dark mass of nameless bodies, hardly human beings.[94] Her attitude invokes the racist mindset defined by Franz Fanon: "The black man is not a man […] there is a zone of nonbeing, an extraordinary sterile and arid region" (*Black Skins, White Masks* 8) or, in short, "humanity at its lowest" (*The Wretched of the Earth* 126).

Lee's immediate reaction is that of fear. At first she sees a mass of people producing animal sounds and movements, but afterwards she only sees body parts and

[94] A similar dramatization of a group of Moroccan faces can be found in *Morocco* (1882), by Edmondo De Amicis. See pages 250-251.

resemblances to animals: "'Mr. Stenham,' she called, looking back past the bearded faces, the tightly wound turbans, the shining black eyes, and mouths stretched (in a monkey-like, frozen smile that had nothing to do with smiling) to reveal the rows of white teeth ("wild animals"), heads tilted upward to see over other heads, and panic began to pour in upon her from all sides. "Mr. Stenham!" She was with her back to the fire now, her eyes running over the rows of fascinated faces, looking desperately for the lighter face" (320). In Fanon's terms, the Other is a "frightening object, such as more or less imaginary attacker, arouses terror […] especially a terror mixed with sexual revulsion" (*Black Skins, White Masks* 155). In her frenzy, she yearns for a white face. At the bottom of her fear lies a simple truth: the possibility of losing herself into that mass, of losing her identity. When facing a shocking cultural experience such as a *mûsem*, Lee cannot interpret the role of the liberal traveler who collects colorful impressions to bring back home: she rejects the Other and takes refuge in her white identity. Moreover, she is determined to bring down the myth of purity that Amar represents, after giving him money so he leaves the *mûsem*: "'[I] told him to go and buy a gun. And the important thing is, he took it. What he does with it's immaterial.' She was about to add: "So there's your purity," but then suddenly she was no longer sure of the extent of her own intelligence (349). Lee wants to prove that Amar is one more being among the mass, ready to join the ranks of nationalism at the first opportunity. For her, he becomes a "predatory sub-human," worse than a "naked savage" because savages are malleable but he "consciously defied progress" (*The Spider's House* 345).

Stenham's reaction to the trance dances, told from Lee's perspective, is radically different to hers. He is determined to lose himself into the music: as a lover of the exotic, he is willing to "succumb" in order to achieve "a false sense of ecstasy, false because self-induced" (320). But afterwards, he starts to feel "a faint nausea" while contemplating different performances. This time they are not the dances of the religious brotherhoods, but

static exhibits, like a black man in trance who burns a substance to repel the evil. He does not longer know how to interpret the culture, everything is too obscure, too visceral for him: "the combination of meaninglessness and ugliness bothered him. There had been something definitely repulsive about those little rings of unmoving people" (333)[95]. Soon he learns the countryside and the *mûsem* is not untouched by the political situation, that the nationalists have arrived and they try to stop the festivities managed to taint the pure culture of the religious festival. He realizes he cannot take refuge in the native culture; it has stopped being a shelter for them, Stenham and Amar, both liminal subjects. Thus, he selfishly turns to himself: "he had no compulsion to save the world […] He merely wanted to save himself." With this realization, he does not longer feel compelled to get involved with the Moroccan troubles, which have become meaningless for him. As a well-off foreigner, he can just walk away from everything: "there would be many more mornings somewhere on the earth for him to lie thus, spread out under the sky, considering these meaningless problems" (344).

Towards the end of the book, Amar becomes completely isolated: he cannot establish a friendship with Mohammed, a boy the same age as him that accompanies the party to Sidi Bou Chta, after finding out he is only interested in his money. When Amar returns to Fez and goes and see Moulay Ali, he is met with hostility and he is accused of being an informer. Moulay Ali uses the same term as Lee, calling him "animal," admitting that he has never met a boy like him. Amar accuses him of making a spider web for the Moroccans, a fragile edifice that would last only one night and they would collapse and trap them all. He is then tricked by Moulay Ali, abandoned playing the *lirah* while the members of the Istiqlal in Moulay Ali's house leave it from the back to avoid the police

[95] The anthropologist Vincent Capranzano describes his own reaction to a Hamadsha performance, marked by a feeling of detachment and cultural distance: "The rest of the dance seemed very unreal to me. I felt very distant, very removed from what was going on in front of me" (*The Hamadsha: A Study in Moroccan Ethnopsychiatry* xiv).

squad that awaits them at the front. Amar manages to scape, but now the only shelter he can think of, their family being in Meknes, is Stenham, who has been a true friend to him, and who has always been concerned with his well-being. "Perhaps with time they could have understood one another's hearts" (394). Amar innocently thinks Stenham would protect him and take him away from Fez, but he is abandoned in the middle of the Meknes road while Stenham and Lee disappear forever.

In *The Spider's House*, Bowles creates a complex narrative spider web: from a threefold perspective (Stenham's, Amar's and Lee's) he is able to produce a catalogue of cross-cultural relationships, racial bias and aesthetic approaches to native culture. Exposed to another culture, Western characters are confronted to their own prejudices and fears. Lee does not yield to the self's undoing watching the performances at the *mûsem* and takes refuge in her own racism. On his part, Stenham abandons the possibility of a real friendship in pursuit of his own selfishness. His ethnographic knowledge proves to be ineffective to reach the Other, becoming a hollow atlas of exotic practices that made his life in Morocco more appealing. But Amar, with his imaginative powers, is willing to approach the Western Other and is more equipped to reach other individuals, even if he does not feel especial sympathy for the culture they represent. At the end, Amar's attitude paves the way for a cosmopolitan approach to the Other. Regardless of the size and importance of his ethnographic knowledge, Bowles was personally open to meet Moroccans, although he never felt he could be one of them. Millicent Dillon in her memoir *You Are Not I*, quotes the following conversation with Bowles:

> [Bowles] "Moroccans […] one can imagine them being like oneself. They're not, of course, not…"
> [Dillon] "But they can be thought of as *not* the other."
> [Bowles] "Yes. Oh, yes. I don't think of them as the other."
>
> (Dillon 195)

Thus, he believed in cultural exchange based on the difference, and created a hybrid notion between the Same and the Other. A different Other, a *not* the Other. Bowles, in his review of Peter Mayne's *The Alleys of Marrakesh*[96], wrote that Moroccans were "real people rather than symbols of nostalgia for a lost simplicity of soul, or exotic and amusing objects of decoration" (87). It seems that Bowles never believed Moroccans were merely ethnographic trophies, that he wanted to go beyond Stenham's assumptions and to establish an egalitarian relation based on respect for their culture.

[96] *London Magazine* Vol. 1, n. 5, June 1954, 84-88.

4. THE AUTHOR AS COSMOPOLITAN

4.1. Cosmopolitanism and expatriation

4.1.1. Definition(s) of cosmopolitanism

The word "cosmopolitan" comes from the Greek term *kosmopolitês*, "citizen of the world," and it has been used to describe a wide range of approaches in moral and socio-political philosophy. The underlying idea to all these different views is that all human beings are or can be citizens in a single community, regardless of their origins or political affiliations.

The notion of cosmopolitanism emerges in Greek antiquity with the Stoic movement. The Stoics claimed citizens should allege themselves to a moral community deeply committed to a fundamental respect for humanity, instead of to a single state government or temporal power. But it was during the Enlightenment that the term began to be used to "indicate an attitude of open-mindedness and impartiality."[97] A cosmopolitan was someone free from particular allegiances or cultural prejudices, someone who refused to submit to a particular religious or political authority. Moreover, the term was sometimes used "to indicate a person who led an urbane life-style, or who was fond of traveling, cherished a network of international contacts, or felt at home everywhere."[98] Kant also explored the notion of cosmopolitanism and all rational beings as members in a single moral community. In his essay *Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Sketch* (1795), he advocated for the creation of a federation of free states and the establishment of common

[97] Kleingeld, Pauline and Brown, Eric, "Cosmopolitanism", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Fall 2014 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2014/entries/cosmopolitanism/>.
[98] See previous footnote.

laws. More recently, the philosopher Jürgen Habermas has recovered Kant's political ideas on cosmopolitanism, formulating a new base to establish a new international order.[99]

I am not going to discuss any trends of political, moral, or economic cosmopolitanism, I would rather focus on cultural cosmopolitanism. It differs from multiculturalism by rejecting any attachment to a particular culture, avoiding any nationalist ideas. It encourages cultural diversity instead.

In recent years, scholar Martha Nussbaum has recovered the notion of cosmopolitanism, strongly influenced by the Stoic perspective,[100] and has promoted an educational model based on cosmopolitanism instead of patriotism. Nussbaum argues that: "By looking at ourselves in the lens of the other, we come to see what in our practices is local and non-necessary, what more broadly or deeply shared" (Nussbaum 10). In this sense, cosmopolitanism is understood as a voyage-out, a way of building ourselves through alterity and finding common bonds in other cultures.

For philosopher Kwame Anthony Appiah, cosmopolitanism should not be seen "as some exalted attainment: it began with the simple idea that in the human community, as in national communities, we need to develop habits of coexistence: conversation in its older meaning, of living together, association" (xix). One might argue that cosmopolitanism cannot be developed in non-egalitarian societies like old colonies, that such coexistence might be thwarted by economic and social differences. Paul Gilroy maintains that the colonial past should be useful for multicultural contemporary societies, "shaping the character of the emergent multicultural relations… and being set to work as an explicit challenge to the revised conceptions of sovereignty that have been invented to accommodate the dreams of a new imperial order" (*Postcolonial Melancholia* 3).

[99] Jürgen Habermas. *The Inclusion of the Other: Studies in Political Theory*, 1998.
[100] Martha Nussbaum. "Patriotism and cosmopolitanism," 2-20.

Appiah offers a wide definition of cosmopolitanism, considering it a device to expand our singular horizons. Thus, it is a struggle for finding a place full of new connections and new possibilities, expanding our multiplicity and our horizons of diversity. Besides, cosmopolitanism is also understood as a plurality of identities, values and opinions: "Cosmopolitans think human variety matters because people are entitled to the options they need to shape their lives in partnership with others" (*Cosmopolitanism* 104). The result is a better way of living together, by means of finding shared and strong values. For Paul Gilroy, this is very necessary in the contemporary postmodern world, defined through consumerism and hyperindividualism. The "transmodern dissidence is increasingly connected to the emergence of an anticapitalist culture that aims to make resistance to neoliberalism as global as capital itself has become" (*Postcolonial Melancholia* 72).

But Appiah also links cosmopolitanism and imagination, something that specially pertains to art and literature: "We can respond to art that is not ours; indeed, we can fully respond to "our" art only if we move beyond thinking of it as ours and start to respond to it as art. But equally important is the human connection.... The connection through a local identity is as imaginary as the connection through humanity" (Appiah 135).

Even if cosmopolitans might consider themselves citizens of the world, being an expatriate is not a necessary circumstance for cosmopolitanism, although it is a frequent condition. Displacement and travel were crucial during the interwar years for many modernist authors. According to Jessica Berman, "The demise of knowable community, the explosion of shared experiences of the past, the disruption of the meaning of old stories and the possibility of new communicable experience" is reflected and contested within modernist texts (Berman 3). This tendency became more evident after World War II and the Cold War, when many Western intellectuals took the decision to become expatriates and distanced themselves from their home cultures. For both travelers and expatriates,

cosmopolitanism was a means of "gaining a deeper comprehension of this world and this experience, a comprehension that at times translated back into their imaginative work," as David G. Farley has pointed out (*Modernist Travel Writing* 195). But modernist and postmodern authors had something else in common apart from their wish to leave behind their home countries shaken by war and to gain a better comprehension of the world. By travelling or settling abroad, they frequently found a ground to build new subjectivities through movement and displacement.

4.1.2. Exile, expatriation and cosmopolitanism

Edward Said defines exile as "the unhealable rift formed between a human being and a native place, between the self and its true home: its essential sadness can never be surmounted" ("Reflections on Exile" 173). Exile opposes cosmopolitanism in many ways even if both have as a result living in a different place from the country of birth. To begin with, exile is imposed, not voluntary. If the exiled yearns for the home country, the cosmopolitan longs for the unknown destination. While exile is understood in terms of loss, cosmopolitanism is seen as something than widens the personal horizons and opens to new possibilities. Besides, exile opposes cosmopolitanism because it brings out the love for the home country, the abandoned community, in a sort of retro-nationalism: "Exile is predicated on the existence of, love for, and bond with, one's native place; what is true of all exile is not that home and love of home are lost, but that loss is inherent in the very existence of both" ("Reflections on Exile" 185).

Expatriates, on the other hand, have a choice, as they voluntary live in an alien country, usually for personal or social reasons. Even without suffering the rigid proscriptions of exile, expatriates might "share in the solitude and estrangement" of it, according to Said ("Reflections on Exile" 181). This feeling of estrangement is what the

writer Mohamed Choukri felt in Tangier: "Tangier is my home, my paradise, my hell," he says. "It is where I am in exile and I cannot leave. I can hate it sometimes, or write about it as if I am in a nightmare" (Hussey 43). Choukri was a Moroccan, but he was of Riffian origin, belonged to a Berber ethnic group and *darija* was not his native tongue.

Papayanis points out that the figure of the expatriate arises suspicion, even condescendence; it seems related to privileged people: "referring to the collective entitlements attached to membership in an elite class, including mobility, relative prosperity, and the unquestionable right to go anywhere and call anywhere home" (*Writing in the Margins* 1). Papayanis sees in displaced writers like Paul Bowles, D. H. Lawrence or Lawrence Durrell an aesthetic and ethical existential project. Expatriate writers consciously chose to travel extensively or to settle abroad, generating distinct expatriate narratives, frequently misinterpreted or overlooked by colonial discourse theory. As the critic Caren Kaplan has argued, there is a myth of displacement that can be found in different expatriate narratives, whether they are travel accounts, modernist fiction or ethnographic texts, narratives that do not question the economic, social, and cultural differences between them and the country they visit.[101] However, as Papayanis explains, this displacement myth cannot explain all expatriate narratives because each displacement experience is intrinsically different, and they frequently challenge these myths.

In *The Location of Culture* (1994), Homi K. Bhabha holds a very different point of view. For him, there is not a fair way for the expatriate writer or the traveler to describe a different culture or its people: "However impeccably the content of an 'other' culture may be known, however anti-ethnocentrically it is represented, it is its *location* as the closure of grand theories, the demand that, in analytic terms, it be always the good object of knowledge, the docile body of differences, that reproduces a relation of domination and is

[101] See *Questions of Travel: Postmodern Discourses of Displacement*, 55.

the most serious indictment of the institutional powers of critical theory" (Bhabha 31). For Bhabha, from a theoretical point of view, location always equals domination. He maintains that different forms of colonization have created hybrid cultures, which lead to cultural collisions and interchanges. Paradoxically, this hybridism contradicts both the attempt to describe and fix indigenous cultures and the attempts of cultural isolation or purity. In this sense, cultural translation, even if it is possible, becomes a minefield.

In *Modernist Fiction, Cosmopolitanism, and the Politics of Community* (2001), Jessica Berman suggests that the itinerant "I" of Bhabha's cosmopolitan citizen is not merely a drifter that remakes his identity while moving between cultures or someone who dissolves himself into "an endlessly fragmented subject in process."[102] For Berman, the migrant is "rather […] a self that comes into being in the moment between these two locations, in the moment of translation that occupies the interstices" (Berman 17). These interstices open a 'space-in-between' in the process of cultural translation, "an interstitial temporality […] I want to try to occupy this hybrid, in between space [with] the subject of a 'translational' rather than 'concentric' cosmopolitanism."[103] Translation becomes the metaphor for the liminal zone between the fragmented self, "between the self and its communities of affiliation, both past and present, as well as between the loyalties and allegiances demanded by those communities" (Berman 17).

While alluding to Spivak's theory, Judith Butler has argued that cultural translation might be a useful tool to let the subaltern speak.[104] To the dangers of cultural appropriation, she maintains that universality is an 'emergence' in the Foucaultian sense, a 'non-place,' a distance that indicates that the opposites do not belong to a common space, as it is a phenomenon that occurs in the interstice and no one is responsible for its emergence. For

[102] See Homi K. Bhabha, "Unpacking My Library… Again," 204.
[103] See previous footnote.
[104] *Contingency, Hegemony, Universality: Contemporary Dialogues on the Left*, 37-38.

Butler, translation has the possibility to counteract colonialist readings, "for it also exposes the limits of what the dominant language can handle […] There is, of course, no such translation without contamination, but there is no mimetic displacement of the original without an appropriation of the term that separates it from its putative authority" (Butler 38).

4.2. Tangier as a palimpsest of subjectivities and Others

Since antiquity, Tangier had been a disputed landmark and a destination for foreigners because of its strategic position overlooking the Strait of Gibraltar. The Greeks gave it its name, and the Romans, Vandals, and Arabs subsequently occupied the city. In the 13th century, the Portuguese claimed Tangier, and the city belonged to them as well as to Spain and Britain for the next two centuries. The Moroccans recaptured it, but in the 19th century the foreign powers regained interest in the city, becoming the diplomatic capital where foreign countries set up their consulates-general.[105] In the second half of the 19th century the number of European merchants rose rapidly from five hundred in 1886 to nine thousand in 1894. The employees and servants who worked for the consulates became protégés, getting an important status as consular agents. The system of protégés had been laid in the 18th century by a treaty between Britain and the Sultan, by which the British were responsible for the legal control of their employees, whether they were Moroccans or foreigners. On the one hand, this system provided many opportunities for corrupt foreigners to make money. On the other hand, it permitted the Moroccans to avoid their national taxes and judicial system. European interference grew rapidly as the number of protégés eventually climbed. European diplomatic intervention also increased, turning Tangier practically into a European enclave. According to historian C. R. Pennell, the city was a major tourist center by the end of the 19th Century, a destination where "rich

[105] See C. R. Pennell, *Morocco: from Empire to Independence*. Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2003, 109.

European visitors sought a winter refuge, and others […] took up permanent residence, building elaborate houses in the Marshan district" (Pennell 129). The consulates organized themselves into a committee that took responsibility for local issues.

When the French established their Protectorate in 1921, the status of the city became unclear. It was resolved in 1924, when Tangier and its surroundings were declared International Zone controlled by diplomat agents from France, Spain, Britain, Portugal, Sweden, Italy, U.S.A and the Netherlands. By the Statute of Tangier every state was given a particular role in the administration of the city. These countries maintained their banks, currencies and post-offices. A Moroccan representative of the Sultan, called *Mandub,* presided powerlessly over an International Legislative Assembly that "ran the affairs of the population of sixty thousand with remarkable inefficiency" (Pennell 154). As a result, the economy collapsed, and the Muslim population suffered disproportionately from heavy taxation and minimal public services. The International Zone lost its privileged status and it was the last colonial possession to fall after the end of the Protectorate, June 1956. By late 1959, it was fully absorbed into Morocco.

In the decade between 1950 and 1960, Tangier's population was estimated around 150,000-180,000 people. The largest group were Moroccan Muslims (around 85,000), followed by Spanish (between 45,000 and 50,000), and Moroccan Jews (20,000). Around 15,000 inhabitants had other European nationalities and 2,000 qualified as "others."[106] It seems fair to call it an international city even though the International Zone days came to an end in 1956. Most Europeans, particularly if they were well-off, knew each other in Tangier. The city center was not big, and they would see each other at the Zoco Chico or in the elegant hotel El Minzah, or in one of the numerous cafés. In the words of William S.

[106] In Rocío Rojas-Marcos, *Tánger: la ciudad internacional*, 220.

Burroughs, Tangier was, above all "a gossipy town, and everyone in the foreign colony knows everyone else" (*Interzone* 59).

While asked in 1979 in an interview why foreigners went to Tangier in its Interzone days, Bowles explained that everyone came there because "you could live for nothing and get whatever you wanted. Right after the war Tangier was extremely cheap… People… kept their bank in Tangier. And it was also a beautiful place to live" (*Conversations with Paul Bowles* 108).

We are talking about a cosmopolitan community, a tower of Babel of nationalities, cultures, and languages. *Darija* was widely spoken as well as Spanish, French and English, together with *Haketia* or *Yaquetía*, a variety of Spanish that borrows heavily from Judeo-Moroccan Arabic.[107]

The hybrid quality of Tangier attracted many reputed visitors. The list is too long to be included in this dissertation, but some examples would be useful to illustrate the different kind of international characters that gathered in town.[108] Among the richest, Woolworth heiress Barbara Hutton, who bought a splendid house in the Kasbah called Sidi Hosni, where the best-known people met in her pseudo-oriental parties; another aristocratic figure was Sir David Herbert, son of the English Earl of Pembroke. Herbert, like Bowles, spent all his life in Tangier even when the International Zone came to an end.[109] Less sophisticated, but anyway interesting was Brion Gysin, who arrived in Tangier with a Fulbright fellowship when he was in his twenties and remained there indefinitely. He was a writer, experimental artist, and William Burroughs' partner for many years. Of course, it is

[107] In *La Vida Perra de Juanita Narboni*, the *Tangerino* writer Ángel Vázquez (1929-1980) reproduced this dialect, frequently used by the Spanish community in Tangier. In an interview with the Moroccan psychoanalyst and novelist Badia Hadj Nasser, who knew Bowles personally, she explained to me that Bowles spoke "like any other *tangerino*", mixing *Darija* with French, Spanish and *Haketia* words (personal file).

[108] For an extended list of known people that lived or passed through Tangier, see Green's *The Dream at the End of the World*, an excellent source of gossipy information about the town in its international days.

[109] Herbert is the author of *Relations and Revelations*, London: Peter Owen, 1992. Bowles prefaced the book, in which Herbert gives a detailed account of the life in Tangier in the 30s. He also wrote *Second Son*, an autobiography.

well known that Burroughs composed his hallucinatory *Naked Lunch* (1959) in Tangier, out of fragmentary texts published many years later under the title *Interzone* (1987). With Burroughs in Tangier, most of the members of the Beat Generation came to visit him. The European atmosphere of Tangier displeased the author, who commented in *Interzone*: "A miasma of suspicion and snobbery hangs over the European Quarter of Tangier" (47). He comments the possibilities to enjoy drugs and prostitution: "Tangier is a vast overstocked market […] there is quite simply too much of everything, too many guides, pimps, prostitutes and smugglers […] You can buy hashish […] in any native café." (54-55). For Burroughs, the quality that attracted most of the visitors and residents was "exemption," legal or otherwise, Tangier is a place to act as one pleases, "it is a sanctuary of noninterference" (59). Truman Capote and Tennessee Williams also spent some time in Tangier, although theirs were occasional visits.[110] The writer Alfred Chester spent several years in Tangier and in the neighboring village of Asilah writing the best of his fiction, *The Exquisite Corpse*, soon after his final mental breakdown.

All these characters and many others had one thing in common: they were all connected in some sort of way with Paul Bowles: Capote and Williams came to see him and Jane; Chester was his protégé and Bowles found a house and a Moroccan boy for him; Gysin was a lifelong friend. It was through Burroughs that Bowles met the Beats, and so on and so forth.[111]

The examples previously given are only a small amount of the people who paraded through Tangier or lived in the city during or after its interzone days. Other famous residents were the writers Ángel Vázquez and Juan Goytisolo; the acclaimed Moroccan author Tahar Ben Jelloun; the journalist Emilio Sanz de Soto, who used to call Tangier "a

[110] Mohamed Choukri wrote *Tennessee Williams in Tangier*, a detailed account of their meeting and a fine portrait of the playwright.
[111] In *Without* Stopping, his autobiography, Bowles lists all the famous visitors that went to Tangier while he was living there (in fact, he mentions all the famous people that he had met in his life).

delicious lie;" the playwright Joe Orton, who captured his affairs with Moroccan boys in his *Diaries*; the painter Francis Bacon, who taught Ahmed Yacoubi to paint with oils; Malcolm Forbes, the American multimillionaire; Jean Genet, to whom Mohamed Choukri devoted a memoir,[112] and a long etcetera. Of course, there were also other less known residents, diplomatic agents, bankers, merchants, shop-keepers and different kinds of businessmen, but in general all of them gathered in the same places. The Spanish formed a big colony, but in general they were far from being rich. A large quantity of Spanish that fled from Spain after the Civil War broke out took shelter in Tangier, others have arrived before looking for jobs. They were more mixed with the Moroccan population than the rest of foreigners; they lived in the same quarters, had similar jobs, and also suffered hardship.

Why were so many foreigners attracted to Tangier? It was conveniently close to Europe, the climate was mild, the costs of living were cheap, it was easy to make offshore financial transactions, and it was intercultural as well as exotic. Besides, as Greg Mullins has pointed out, Tangier served as "a refuge for people who needed to escape limitations imposed by national authorities" (*Colonial Affairs* 6). Because in the European and American collective imagination, Tangier in its international days was linked to excess and legal exception. Drugs and prostitution were forbidden in the International Zone, but the justice system was weak and favored foreign residents. As Mullins explains, "a thriving economy of commercial sex ensured that sexual adventure was readily available to the wealthy in Tangier and the national, cultural, and linguistic divisions were bridged through intimate physical contact" (Mullins 6). But, as Andrew Hussey has pointed out, the city was "a place of endless shifting moods where sexual or poetic possibilities were always in flux" (Hussey 39). Literary residents in Tangier such as William Burroughs, Joe Orton, Ira Cohen or Alfred Chester considered Tangier as a modern harem, where boys were

[112] I am referring to *Jean Genet in Tangier*, that was translated by Paul Bowles and included an introduction by William Burroughs. New York: Ecco Press, 1973.

available thanks to its sexual economy. As Said points out, to the western mindset, the Orient has been associated "with the escapism of sexual fantasy." Thus, Oriental sex was a "commodity as any other available in the mass culture, with the result that readers and writers could have it if they wished without necessarily going to the Orient" (*Orientalism* 190).

On the other hand, Tangier was an exotic destination for the troubled minds of the expatriates who had difficulties to find a place of their own in their home countries. As the critic Mohamed Laamiri points out, borrowing Charles Baudelaire's words: "Tangier was sometimes […] the exotic answer to a desire to flee the horror of home toward a destination set 'anywhere, anywhere as long as it is out of the world'" (Laamiri 7).[113] I have devoted chapter 4.5 to explore displacement and expatriation as tools of transgression to contravene the domestic status quo.

In this sense, Tangier could be considered a site for projecting Western desires, desires that could not be fulfilled at home. The colonial context provided the ideal framework for this project, allowing the formation of a "sanctuary of noninterference." According to Said, in the West there has been a process of "imaginative examination" of things Oriental that has been enacted "according to a detailed logic governed not simply by empirical reality but by a battery of desires, repressions, investments, and projections" (*Orientalism* 8). In this line of thought, the construction of Tangier as a site for the accomplishment of desires was the construction of a myth, and endless source of fascination for the Western imagination.

The Spanish writer Juan Goytisolo argues that many important artistic and literary texts emerged from the fascination that Tangier caused in the minds of foreigners, suggesting that it was the same fascination that attracted many French and English travelers

[113] In Mohamed Laamiri, "Tangier's Appeal and Western Voices: Between Geographical Nearness and Cultural Remoteness," 7-17.

to Spain during the Romantic period. For Goytisolo, it seems unfair to condemn these works after the Orientalist demythologization, inasmuch as the gaze of the foreigner is fundamental in history of cultures.[114] I find that Goytisolo's ideas especially apply in the case of those works which challenge the binary oppositions West versus East, civilized versus uncivilized that characterize the Orientalist discourse.[115]

For Homi Bhabha, cultural hybridization reformulates and "renews the past" (*The Location of Culture* 7): hybridity is not the convergence of previous traditions, but rather a third space in which the cultural encounters are reconceptualized, leading to a subversive cultural renegotiation from which the previous traditions can be challenged and revised, dismantling the apparatus of power. In the section "Tangiers or Casablanca?", included in the chapter "The Postcolonial and the Postmodern" of *The Location of Culture*, Bhabha refers to the "temporality of Tangiers," which erases the "occidental spaces of language – inside/outside, past/present, those foundationalist epistemological positions of Western empiricism and historicism. Tangiers opens up disjunctive, incommensurable relations of spacing and temporality" (182). Bhabha suggests that it is possible to re-imagine the city of Tangier as an "exemplary site" (180) in which the cultural encounters in the third space can take place.

Similarly, Greg Mullins argues that writers like William Burroughs and Bowles found themselves in the middle of a predicament, being Westerners in a colonial context. Their literary answer was highlighting the temporality of Tangier: "While they step into a situation that casts them as foreign and white and therefore "colonizer," they write interzone texts that critique binary structures of dominance and that imagine new forms of subjectivity" (*Colonial Affairs* 15).

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[114] Quoted in Rojas-Marcos, 364. Originally published online in the magazine *Mundo Árabe* under the name "El Misterio de Tánger," date unknown. <http://www.mundoarabe.org/tanger.htm>

[115] Goytisolo also supports this position in *Crónicas Sarracinas*, were he self-analyzes his works of fiction set in Morocco through the Orientalist lens. See "De *Don Julián* a *Makbara*: Una posible lectura orientalista," 249-252.

In this sense, Tangier can be considered a "world literary space," a term coined by Pascale Casanova in *The World Republic of Letters* (2004). According to Casanova, there are authors who have an international vocation, who seek greater freedom for their work. These authors "know the laws of world literary space and […] make use of them in trying to subvert the dominant norms of their respective national fields" (Casanova 109). In this sense, cosmopolitan authors do not only criticize the binary structures of dominance of the place they chose to settle, they need to subvert his or her national codes as well. The literary space has an effect on them, while at the same time, they are leaving their trace in the literary space, expanding it and re-imagining it with new forms of subjectivity. Casanova points out that literature, even if its not free from political domination, has a distinct way of maintaining a certain degree of independence, "of constituting itself as a distinct world in opposition to the nation and nationalism, a world in which external concerns appear only in refracted form, transformed and reinterpreted in literary terms and with literary instruments" (Casanova 86). It seems that Tangier was, perhaps still is, a "site of cultural creation,"[116] where foreigners and locals exchanged experiences, where foreign authors met native authors, where the space and the encounters became a source of inspiration for all of them, whose works inspired others to travel to Tangier and to continue re-reading and re-writing the city. Tangier acts as a creative catalyst capable of inspiring artistic works and attracting creative visitors.

In the process of creation of a world literary space, Tangier was undergoing another process of mythologization. In the minds of the American readers of the 1950s, it became a place to get away from the conservatism in the U. S.[117] In the American imagination, the

[116] I am borrowing James Clifford's term from *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth,* 30-31. Even though the cultural anthropologist does not mention Tangier, he argues that Paris in the 1920s and 1930s was a site of cultural creation that included the detour and return of people like Alejo Carpentier, Vicente Huidobro, Aimé Césaire, Franz Fanon, all traveling Others that took Surrealism out of Paris, and in the process "Surrealism traveled, and was changed in travel" (30).
[117] As Allen Hibbard has pointed out in "Introduction: A Moveable Feast," in *Bowles Beats, Tangier*, 7-9.

international Tangier was linked to excess and depravity. At the same time, World War II marked the introduction of Americans and their products in Morocco and the introduction of Morocco to America. Brian T. Edwards has noticed that the concept of Morocco as a new market was commented by the American press of the time as a reapplication of the frontier myth.[118] In the opening lines of Mohamed Choukri's *Paul Bowles in Tangier*, the author asks himself about the origin of the myth of the city. He thinks that it is "utterly absurd" (126), and that it must have been provoked by an intense nostalgia for the city of old times and its past as an international zone. According to Choukri, Tangier was, to many visitors "little more than a bordello, an endless beach or a huge sanatorium" (127). Nevertheless, Choukri draws a line between the passers-by who transit through the city to write an article or a pamphlet, full of clichés, and the expatriates, whose "nostalgia for the city's lost innocence is justified" (127), as it was the case of Paul and Jane Bowles. I assume Choukri is differentiating between those who felt nostalgia for the past Tangier and those who felt colonial nostalgia for Tangier-the myth. The same kind nostalgia can be found in recent publications. Josh Shoemake's *Tangier: A Literary Guide for Travellers* (2013) is a good example of the process of mythologization that the city is still undergoing. The book, defined in its jacket as the perfect companion for an "exotic journey or an armchair afternoon," recalling the purpose of nineteenth-century travel books, draws a list of must-see places and includes quotations of different works by renowned authors who lived or stayed in the city. Shoemake, that calls the city "the edge of the known world" (1), maintains that Tangier's "literary history is unlike any the world has known, or may ever know" (2).

One of the metaphors more applied to Tangier is that of a crossroads, a point of intersection of several cultures, a site for encounters. In his novel *Silent Day in Tangier*,

[118] See "Sheltering Screens: Paul Bowles and Foreign Relations." *American Literary History* 17 (Summer 2005): 307-334.

Tahar Ben Jelloun claims: "Tangier […] sat at one of the world's crossroads, living in its myths and legends" (*Silent Day in Tangier* 34). In recent articles we still find allusions to this meeting point between the East and the West.[119] William Burroughs defined it as place where "East meets West coming round the other way" (*Interzone* 137). What did Burroughs refer to? To a crossroads in which the normative Western conventions could be avoided, where visitors came looking for freedom sexual or otherwise, for a new culture to be explored, or simply looking for an easy life. Moreover, the mongrel character of the city would create a general feeling of living at the edge;[120] Tangier was a liminal space, a frontier *per se*, situated in Africa but overlooking Europe, a place which was neither the West nor exactly the East, a multicolonized landmark inside a bicolonized country; linguistically, culturally and sexually diverse, Tangier was commonly felt, in Bowles's words, as "the end of the world."[121] And frontier dwellers like Paul Bowles could not have chosen a better place to settle and to be dissolved in.

In the next section we will explore Bowles's disposition towards the city and how it might have shaped his cosmopolitan attitudes.

4.3. Bowles's cosmopolitan attitudes

When in 1975 Paul Bowles was asked why he had traveled so much, his answer was categorical: "I've always wanted to get as far as possible from the place where I was born. Far both geographically and spiritually. To leave it behind. I felt that life is very short and that the world is there to see and one should know as much about it as possible […] One

[119] See, for instance, Gisela Williams, "Tangier is a crossroads of history and hedonism," *The New York Times*. December 22, 2008 <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/12/23/travel/23iht-trtangier.1.18861833.html?_r=0>; a video recorded by the channel France24: "Tangier: Forever at a crossroads" November, 2013 <http://www.france24.com/en/20131128-tangiers-forever-crosswords-tour-of-the-maghreb>. See also the academic article by Allen Hibbard: "Tangier at the Crossroads: Cross-Cultural Encounters and Literary Production," *Writing Tangier*, Eds. Ralph M. Coury and,Robert Kevin Lacey. New York: Peter Lang, 2009, pp. 1-12.

[120] For an approach to Burrough's use of Tangier as a literary space, see my essay "'Dream of a Penal Colony': William S. Burroughs Translates Tangier."

[121] The quotation belongs to the short story "Midnight Mass" (1976), *Collected Stories*, 491.

belongs to the whole world, not to just part of it" (*Conversations* 90). His answer is quintessentially cosmopolitan. He feels a part of the whole world, a transnational individual that can embrace other cultures. However, his cosmopolitanism does not seem to harbor any humanistic traces: his voyage out is a device to get new experiences, to admire new places. In a letter written from Tangier to his friend Charles Henry Ford, November 19, 1947, Bowles introduces his own definition of uprooting: "I'm always happiest in a place I've never been before and about which I know nothing. There is absolutely no way to be again in a place. Whether or not it has changed, it's never the same" (*In Touch*, 179). There is a seminal feeling of nostalgia implied in these few sentences, not the colonial nostalgia to which I have previously alluded, but simple longing for the past that will never come back again, longing for the feeling of living a new experience for the first time, which is the most intense, the most vivid. He continues writing in the same letter: "I have a hovering feeling of not being really in Tangier at all. It is terribly changed, and I can't bear to try to imagine what it used to be like. Part of what it used to be like was of course what I used to be like, and since that too is gone, it seems that it would be needless torture to search for a past which has left no vestige" (*In Touch* 179). He never belonged truly to the places he lived in and he did not expect it either. What puts him in motion, going from one place to another, is an escape drive, a force to leave behind what is known.

Bowles's transnational identity allowed him to be a bystander, an identity so keen to his literary persona, the "invisible spectator" I have already mentioned. As a liminal subject, Bowles rejected the American values and the American way of life in pursuit of literary destinations (the Paris and Berlin of his youth) and exotic destinations (Mexico and Central America, North Africa and Asia). When he was in his twenties, the compulsion to get away becomes evident in his personal correspondence. In a letter to his mentor and lover Aaron Copland, written in 1933, he confesses: "I dreaded sleeping. In Europe, I

dreaded it because I dreamed of being in America, which reminded me somehow I had escaped from a prison and the guards were on my trail" (*In Touch* 116). This panic comes from knowing he is unwillingly "attached to America," his personal prison. The dread disappears when he feels "unlocated": "In Africa for instance, I can sit and feel unlocated; I can look at the landscape and turn the page and look at another, and it means nothing. But [in America] I look at the landscape, and it looks back at me, and I am frightened of it, and want to get out as fast as possible, ant that's about the whole story" (*In Touch* 117). What eases his dread is the voyage out, the transnational possibilities of being a nomad, the lone spectator of the landscape, which acquires literary connotations, as the blank page in which everything is new. Displacement becomes the necessary condition to get rid of the inherited values in the creation of a transnational subject. The projection of Bowles's desires in this blank landscape is a cosmopolitan urge to see new places, the need to dissolve himself in faraway places. As we know, this is the same urge cultivated by his characters when they embark on a trip that, for them, usually implies terrible consequences.

We also find cosmopolitan overtones linked to the notion of displacement in Bowles's definition of culture in his essay "Windows on the past" (1955). For the author, culture is "essentially a matter of using the past to give meaning to the present." According to the Bowles, for Americans, European culture became a supplier of "that lost childhood which never happened, but whose evocation can be so instrumental in helping us to locate ourselves in time and space" (*Travels* 103). Culture is the transnational, cosmopolitan tool that places us in time and space.

Back to Tangier, one of the first impressions the city roused in him can be traced in a letter to Bruce Morrissette, written in August 1931, when he was only twenty-one years old. He defined it as a "perfect place to live […] the town is too beautiful for words. like no dream one could have of a place where streets are absolutely indistinguishable from

hallways. it is often necessary to walk into a house to tell whether the street is the hallway or the hallway is the street. the sky disappears for long stretches at a time, and the walls are of tile […] it will take weeks to learn all of it" (*In Touch* 82-83).

Bowles left North Africa and went to live in New York, then traveled through Mexico, Central America and South America. Until 1947, when he had a dream. In it, he was walking "slowly through complex and tunneled streets. As I reviewed it, lying there, sorry to have left the place behind, I realized with a jolt that the magic city really existed. It was Tangier. My heart accelerated, and memories of other courtyards and stairways flooded in… for the Tangier in which I had wandered had been the Tangier of 1931" (*Without Stopping* 274). The same year, Bowles convinced an editor that agreed to pay an advance for a *The Sheltering Sky*. Bowles set definitely to Morocco, where he lived for most of his life, despite sporadic stays outside the country.

The Tangier he dreamed of in 1947 and the Tangier he witnessed in 1931 (which looked like a dream) were both defined in architectural terms, urban landscapes empty of human interaction. The quest of the self in these empty landscapes is full of possibilities, and becomes intimately linked to displacement and expatriation. Papayanis states that the expatriate narrative is not dissimilar to the male-quest romance. She explains that "the classic tale of imperial adventure represents the journey out, the domestication and appropriation of alien space, and the triumphal return of the adventurer" (*Writing in the Margins* 147). In the case of Bowles's characters, the return of the adventurer is always thwarted one way of another, as his characters die, become mad or they just do not get what they expected. Papayanis compares Joseph Conrad's ambivalent heroes, who neither overcome nor conquer alterity, with Bowles's, as both share the same concern with the dangers of the dark soul of Africa and the perhaps darker shadow of the West.

However, Bowles did not consider himself a consummate expatriate. "I don't see myself, really. I have no ego," he declared in 1981 (*Conversations* 115). This seemingly naïve remark hides the same desire to feel unlocated, to dissolve in a blank landscape. "I don't see myself, I have no ego" veers to the Homeric "My name is Nobody." He was still playing to be the invisible spectator at the top of his game. The Bowlesian self, like the cunning Ulysses, defines himself through negation. Nevertheless, the author does link his own displacement to creativity: "When you cut yourself off from the life you've been living and you haven't yet established another life, you're free […] If you don't know where you're going, you're even freer […] Probably if I hadn't had some contact with what you call 'exotic' places, it wouldn't have occurred me to write at all" (*Conversations* 123).

Besides his urge to leave behind the U.S., Bowles never answered clearly to the question of why he had stopped traveling and remained living in Morocco. However, in 1984 Bowles commented that what he had initially found in Morocco was a "pleasingly primitive country" (*Conversation with Paul Bowles* 160). This cosmopolitan quest for the primitive was completed by a certain identification with Moroccan culture. He pointed out in one of his letters to Alec France in 1975 that he had stayed in Tangier because "on arriving I found a people admirably attuned to my own fantasies" (*In Touch* 465). As I have explored in the second section of this dissertation,[122] while visiting 'exotic' places, Bowles sought, like many other travel writers, to recuperate a kind of cultural Golden Age, an undefined preindustrial age, sometimes even a lost childhood. Besides, he had been interested since the beginning in Moroccan people as inhabitants of a toy cosmos, that his ways and dwellings took him back to early childhood. But Bowles was interested in Morocco not only as a means to recuperate a glimpse of a premodern era, but he was drawn to it "as a social space" (Papayanis 144). He is increasingly attracted to Moroccan people,

[122] See pages 24-25, 29.

not only to Moroccan metropolitan and outdoor landscapes. It is not until Bowles takes residence in Morocco, that the presence of the Other becomes significant in his works. Moreover, the recovery of the premodern Golden Age would become the underlying subject in many of his works, as we have seen in *The Spider's House* or in the case of *Points in Time*. As Papayanis aptly indicates, in his fiction Bowles makes the radical Other the "crucible of the self" (144). "It is in the face of the Other that the question of the self arrives" (144). In this way, expatriation becomes an opportunity to test the limits and possibilities of the self. The imaginative response to this exploration can be found in his works of fiction.

Despite the possible identification with the Other that Bowles might felt and his knowledge of local culture, he was never tempted to go native. His ethics of expatriation allowed him to remain a transnational subject as years went by. In an interview for the Moroccan magazine *Al Wasat* in March 1992, he declared: "I am not American nor am I Moroccan. I am a visitor on earth," maintaining that one had to be a Muslim to know Morocco and belong to its universe.[123]

As years passed by and Tangier increasingly changed and became a far echo from the Interzone days, most expatriates left town. In 1973, affected by his wife Jane's recent death, Bowles wrote to Audrey Wood that nothing kept him in the city save habit, but that he would remain there "since each time I've gone back to the States I've found it less a place where I wanted to be" (*In Touch* 451). Mature Bowles felt the same urge he had when he was twenty to leave behind the United States. When asked in 1975 what kept him there, he answered "it has changed less than the rest of the world, and continues to seem less apart of this particular era than most cities. It's a pocket outside the mainstream…

[123] Reproduced in Mohamed Choukri, *Jean Genet, Tennessee Williams and Paul Bowles in Tangier*, translated by Gretchen Head and John Garrett. London: Telegram, 2009. 293.

nothing is going to happen here" (*Conversations with Paul Bowles* 86). Notwithstanding changes, he appreciates that the city has not evolved the same way other places had. Twelve years later, the tone in his diary is definitely pessimistic: "Whatever charms the town once had have long since been forgotten" (*Two Years Beside the Strait* 15).

According to Paul Gilroy, there are key figures in history that inspire "cosmopolitan solidarity" (Gilroy 72, 80), who have been capable of inspiring people worldwide, like Ghandi or W. E. B. DuBois. I would never argue that Bowles was one of these figures, but following Gilroy's definition, I am inclined to think that there are other figures that inspire a cosmopolitan longing, that provide an inspiration to voyage, who propel others to leave behind the suffocating home soil. Brian T. Edwards maintains that Bowles had became a counterculture figure in America by the end of the 1950s, a status that he maintained throughout the 1960s and 1970s, when he was a recurrent figure in guidebooks, as one of the landmarks in Tangier. His figure became attractive to generations of Western beatniks, hippies, and their successors and "He exerted influence on U.S. literary culture and the counterculture through a variety of activities […]: he popularized French existentialism through his early fiction and translations […]; he unwittingly attracted William S. Burroughs to Tangier in the 1950s, introduced Berber and Arab musical forms to the West through field recordings, published a collection of cannabis-fueled fiction in 1962 (and his recipe for hashish jam in *Rolling Stone* a dozen years later), and collaborated with illiterate Moroccan authors in the postcolonial period" (*Morocco Bound* 81). Mohamed Choukri calls him the "spiritual father" of the Beat Generation, because he understood better than anyone else their wish to break with the ties of family and society, as he had undergone the same process.[124] In 1952, the publication of his novel *Let it Come Down* coincided with the Tangier riots. Bowles was afraid that the events might transform the novel "from a book

[124] In Mohamed Choukri, *Jean Genet, Tennessee Williams and Paul Bowles in Tangier*, 143.

about contemporary life into a document dealing with a bygone era, but did not prove to be the case." As he reflected in his autobiography, more than twenty years later: "The popular image of Tangier has not altered much. People still arrive expecting the old atmosphere of excess and prodigality which prevailed in the 1940s; sometimes they even claim to have found it" (*Without Stopping* 315).

So far in this chapter we have established how his cosmopolitan stance shaped Bowles's career and life choices since a young age. We have also seen how this attitude triggered his literary career and imbued his literary persona, and also how his prolonged contact with Moroccan culture permeated his fiction and made of him a kind of guru for younger generations, a representative of Tangier's literary space. But there is another cosmopolitan aspect of his work, a cognitive approach recently developed by Alexa Weik von Mossner. In *Cosmopolitan Minds* (2014), Weik analyzes the works of several transnational authors that left the U.S. during World War II and the early Cold War period and how these writers employed strategic empathy in their texts to rouse strong emotions in their readers in order to promote their cosmopolitan imagination and to challenge their conservative worldviews. Weik points out that these writers were "othered" in American society for reasons related to issues of class, race, gender, sexuality or politics (Weik 8). In the case of Paul Bowles, Weik maintains, far for employing a cosmopolitan didacticism, he manipulated his reader's empathy "to provoke feelings of guilt, shame and disgust, and thus a cognitive recognition of their own parochialism and morally questionable behavior" (Weik 5), illustrating the limits of the cosmopolitan imagination. She argues that "certain forms of moral disgust may actually further the development of critical and reflexive modes of cosmopolitanism, especially if they can be experienced at a safe distance" (153).

4.4. Bowles's role as a translator

Paul Bowles was familiar with translation since his twenties,[125] and he spoke Spanish, French, and *darija* fluently. Since the mid 1950s, he translated twenty novels and more than twenty short stories written or told by Moroccan authors and storytellers, mainly Larbi Layachi (Driss ben Hamed Charhadi, 1937-1986), Mohamed Choukri (1935-2003) and Mohammed Mrabet (1936-). The translation work increased during the 1960s, and mainly the 1970s, when his own literary production dropped, particularly in the wake of his wife's death in 1973. He collaborated sporadically with Mohammed Mrabet until 1992.

Bowles expresses how the idea of translating occurred to him in his preface to *Five Eyes*, that compiled the short stories of five different storytellers: "I had first admired Ahmed Yacoubi's stories as long ago as 1947, but it was not until 1952 that the idea occurred to me that it might be instrumental in preserving at least a few of them… One day as Yacoubi began to speak, I seized a notebook and rapidly scribbled the English translation of a story… across its pages" (*Five Eye*s 7). Notice how the emphasis is drawn on "preserving." This is supposedly Bowles's main aim in transcribing and translating the works of Moroccan storytellers, the preservation of the memory of these tales, for without his intermediary work they would be inevitably lost. Nevertheless, all the translations made by Bowles are not merely folktales. There are three autobiographies,[126] several novels, numerous fables, short stories and even the memoirs *Tennessee Williams in Tangier* and

[125] Translations form the French include: Roger Frison-Roche, *The Lost Trail of the Sahara*, New York: Prentice-Hall, 1951; Jean-Paul Sartre, *No Exit*, produced as *No Exit* in 1946 on Broadway in New York at the Biltmore Theatre, New York: Samuel French, 1958; Isabelle Eberhardt, *The Convert,* San Francisco: City Lights Books, 1974; Isabelle Eberhardt, *The Oblivion Seekers and Other Stories*. San Francisco: City Lights Books, 1975. The translations from the Spanish language include four novels and several short stories by Guatemalan writer Rodrigo Rey Rosa, who inherited Bowles's literary estate. The novels are: *The Path Doubles Back*, with Illustrations by David Craven, New York: Red Ozier Press, 1982; *The Beggar's Knife*, San Francisco: City Lights Books, 1985; *Dust on Her Tongue*, London: Peter Owen, 1989; *The Pelcari Project*, London: Peter Owen, 1991. Bowles also translated numerous short stories by these and others writers.

[126] Layachi's *A Life Full of Holes* (1964), Choukri's *For Bread Alone* (1973) and Mrabet's *Look and Move On* (1976).

Jean Genet in Tangier, written by Mohamed Choukri.

It is important to clarify that the result of the work with Moroccan authors did not produce translations strictly speaking. In the case of Larbi Layachi and Mohammed Mrabet the source were oral tales in *darija*. These were illiterate authors, storytellers that never learnt to write nor read. Bowles recorded their tales in tapes, and translated them directly from the tape into English. Thus, the "original" works are non-existent, they are neither printed nor published, and most of the original tapes are now lost, so it is difficult to determine the rigor of the translations, or even to compare the Maghrebi version with the English one. More than translations, they are collaborations, as they are the last and only product. Moreover, *darija*, is not a literary language, Moroccan authors usually wrote in Modern Standard Arabic or even in French, like Tahar Ben Jelloun, one of the most renowned authors of the Maghreb, an expatriate himself, who went to live in France when he was twenty-seven. Modern Standard Arabic is the language of education, politics, and high communication, a language that an illiterate Moroccan, as the case of Layachi or Mrabet, would be unable to use. On the contrary, *darija* is just a spoken language, and it is considered a dialectal variety of Arabic.

The case of Mohamed Choukri was different. He was a writer, not a storyteller. He learnt how to write when he was twenty, and he produced his works in Classical Arabic, a language that Bowles never claimed to master. Choukri explains in his memoir *Paul Bowles in Tangier* how they worked together to translate Choukri's autobiography, *For Bread Alone*. Choukri had not finished his autobiography when they started to work, but was writing a few pages ahead while Bowles translated the already written sections. Choukri maintains that he dictated a Spanish translation that Bowles transcribed into English, specifying that he never used the Moroccan dialect because he did not master its

use for storytelling as Layachi or Mrabet did (*In Tangier* 172). Choukri also affirms that, while working with illiterate storytellers, they used *darija* mixed with Spanish words and expressions.[127]

Bowles's role as a translator has cosmopolitan implications. His collaborations can be considered another form of critical cosmopolitanism, a way of bringing "home" hybrid texts that belonged to other culture. As Brian T. Edwards has noticed, many of the short stories he translated in the 1970s were published in such popular magazines like *Harper's Magazine* and *Rolling Stone*, in a crucial moment in American literary representations of the Arab world, and of Arab representations of Americans.[128] Moreover, Bowles, was presenting the work of 'othered' Others, as the Moroccan authors were marginal figures in their land: *darija* was not valued as a literary language,[129] and Mohamed Choukri's writings in their Arabic version were censored in Morocco until 2000, only three years before his death. Even today, Layachi's and Mrabet's works remain unpublished in their *darija* version or even in Arabic translation.[130]

In any case, we cannot forget that Bowles was an expatriate in a foreign land where he was 'superior' to the average Moroccan inhabitant in terms of money, privileges and education. His own writings are obviously written from the "positional authority" to which Said alluded, since "the Oriental is *contained* and *represented* by dominating frameworks" (*Orientalism* 95). The Tangier of the International Zone was a good example of a

[127] This book, originally published in Arabic as *Paul Bowles wa 'uzla tanja* (Tangier: Altopress, 1996), roused Bowles's anger and was the object of great controversy. Juan Goytisolo, who has written the introduction of the Spanish translation, suggests Choukri might have been interested in settling scores with Bowles, in a kind of literary revenge. The memoir was not translated into English until 2009.

[128] See Brian T. Edwards, "The Moroccan Paul Bowles." *Michigan Quarterly Review,* Vol. L, Issue 2, Spring 2011. <http://hdl.handle.net/2027/spo.act2080.0050.206>

[129] As Brian T. Edwards points out in his introduction to Mrabet's *Love with a Few Hairs* (Fez: Moroccan Cultural Studies Centre, 2004), Mohammed Abu-Talib, Abdallah Laroui, and Tahar Ben Jelloun all criticized Bowles's work as a translator when he started to collaborate with Moroccan storytellers.

[130] In the last years, Mrabet has continued publishing short stories, mainly in Tangier's literary magazine *Nejma*. In this case the transcription/translation process is made in French by Simon-Pierre Hamelin, chief editor of the magazine and present owner of the Librairie des Colonnes in Tangier, one of the main cultural hubs in the city in the past and the present.

dominating framework, but it was also such during the decolonization process, when an American citizen could still enjoy a privileged status. However, translations are a middle ground in this dominating framework, as it is the product of collaboration between a 'colonial' subject and the 'colonizer,' a hybrid voice that challenges the categories of literature and identity. Are they "Moroccan" texts? Are they "American"? They are something else. Moving away from the singularities of language, identity, location, they occupy the 'space-in-between' that Bhabha alluded to, providing a terrain that promotes new signs of identity and innovative sites of confrontation and collaboration. Storytelling is, in itself, the ability to exchange experiences, as Walter Benjamin explained (*Illuminations* 83). In this sense, the exchange becomes an intercultural experience, the third space to which Homi Bhabha alluded, a site for reconceptualization from where the artist can challenge and revise previous traditions.

As such, these texts enabled their authors to criticize their own society, even the Westerners who lived there oblivious of the life conditions of lower class Moroccans. In the case of Mrabet's *Look and Move On*, he even portrayed Bowles, offering a critique of his own translator. Bowles, in turn, was himself an 'othered' Other after fleeing the U.S. and rejecting its values and way of life. In this sense, translations present a challenge to the binary structures of dominance that Mullins alluded, bridging the gap between the languages of Tangiers and between the colonial relations and representations of the Other. By transferring these works to an American audience, Bowles was posing critical question and cosmopolitan challenges to a readership that was not used to such level of hybridism. As Brian T. Edwards notes, these works did not receive the attention of many American critics, as they did "not conform to our [the American criticism] categories of American, African, or Arab literatures" ("Sheltering Screens: Paul Bowles and Foreign Relations" 327).

Edward Said declared that, in the representation of the Other, there was no vantage point outside the relationships between cultures, "between unequal imperial and non-imperial powers, between different Others, a vantage that might allow one the epistemological privilege of somehow judging, evaluating, and interpreting free of the encumbering interests, emotions, and engagements of the ongoing relationships themselves" ("Representing the Colonized" 306). If we take Said's stance representations of the Other within Western discourse are an impossible task. However, Said leaves the door open to a possible interpretation: "There is no way […] of apprehending the world from within our culture without also apprehending the imperial contest itself. And this […] is the true defining horizon" ("Representing the Colonized" 307). With their translations, Bowles and the Moroccan authors were using as a 'defining horizon' a hybrid project that enable them to produce a simultaneous re-reading of the imperial contest from the Western and from the Oriental point of view. In the texts created by Moroccan authors and translated by Paul Bowles we find different reactions of the postcolonial Other to this dysfunctional context that was Tangier.

Bowles believed he shared with Moroccans a similar sense of creativity, that its inhabitants were people 'attuned' to his own fantasies. If we take a look at these collaborations, the similarities between the works of Paul Bowles and the tales of the Moroccan authors are evident, especially in the case of Mrabet's stories. We frequently find similar themes and the encounter with the Western Other, in this case from the perspective of the Oriental Self, occupies a central place.

In the novel *Love with a Few Hairs* (1967), Mrabet tells a fascinating story of love addiction, magic potions, and witches' spells that further complicate an already complicated situation in which the seventeen-year-old Mohammed is the primary love interest not only of his wife Mina but also of his homosexual lover, Mr. David, who runs a

hotel in Tangier. The "few hairs" in the title are part of the magic potion that Mohammed uses to bewitch Mina to get her to fall in love with him. In "A Friend of the World" (1961) and "The Wind at Beni Midar" (1962), the male protagonists turn to witches as well to get a powder to put a spell on those who thwart their plans. The conflict between the traditional Morocco and the Westernized Morocco that Mohammed embodies through his friendship with Nazarenes, his drinking and his European clothes mirrors the conjugal conflict. He mocks Mina's father for his attachment to the old traditions: "Your father with his djellaba and his pants a kilometer wide, and the turban down over his ears like somebody in the cinema. I've made you into something civilized" (96-97). As I have mentioned in Section 3.2.3, the same conjugal conflict arises in Bowles's story "The Empty Amulet" (1981).

In 1969 Mrabet and Bowles published two more works, *The Lemon*, a novel, and *M'Hashish*, a collection of short stories. The former recalls episodes from Layachi's *A Life Full of Holes* (1964), and Choukri's *For Bread Alone* (1973). It is a tale about the loss of innocence and the difficulties to be initiated in the adult world. Abdeslam lives in a kind of border between childhood and adulthood, refusing to surrender to the demands of those around him. At the end of the story, he attacks his roommate, Bachir, with a lemon full of razor blades because he had wanted to have sex with him. This dramatic passage from childhood to maturity reveals Abdeslam's victory over a colonized, patriarchal and exploiting society that alienates him.

Another collaboration was the autobiography *Look and Move On* (1976), which deals with the troubling passage from adolescence to maturity, highly marked by economic and erotic exchange with foreigners. The movement from bisexuality to heterosexuality goes together with the acquisition of an economic status that allows Mrabet and his fictional characters to get married and abandon their male lovers, as it is the case of *Love with a Few Hairs*.

The central conflict in most of Mrabet's stories is the search for identity of a Moroccan youth who is in contact with his own society and with the West. In this sense they resemble Amar from *The Spider's House*. Although Amar does not have any sexual contact with Westerners, he tries to reconcile his vision of his own society with individual friendship with a Westerner. In Mrabet's case, his characters made a two-way trip, condemning their own society first and then embracing the West "which often frustrates his ambition to identify with it." As a result, they return to their society, with its traditions and values "in a final attempt of self-assertion" (Dawood 120).

Chocolate Creams and Dollars (1992), a loosely autobiographical novel inspired by the time the writer Alfred Chester spent in the town of Asilah, offers a variation of this theme. Driss, the young protagonist, is the housekeeper for an Englishman who frequently lends his house to his friends. Driss seems to have tamed his Western employer and his visitors: sleeps with all the girls and women who visit the house, pilfers all the Westerners he is in touch with. And yet, he knows exactly what do they expect from Morocco. He knows they would be pleased if he decorates the new house so it looks "Moorish;" he knows they would appreciate if he buys them *kif*, takes them to the must-see picturesque places and to Jilala dances. In the end, he extorts the heirs of the house to get it for nothing. Driss does not wish an equal relationship with Westerners, he wants to overcome them. When Alphren (Alfred Chester in the fiction), asks him why he likes money so much, he answers, "We didn't invent it […] You invented it […] Before we bartered. Everything's changed since the Europeans came" (46). Instead of feeling alienated, he knows his place in the world, he is fulfilled by his victory over Westerners. In the last collaboration between Bowles and Mrabet, the Oriental achieves his self-assertion through the domination of the Western Other, fulfilling Fanon's prophecy: "The native is an oppressed person whose permanent dream is to become the persecutor" (*The Wretched of the Earth* 53).

M'Hashish (1969), whose title translates as "under the influence of hashish," includes ten short stories that involve the deeds and adventures of hashish users. Lighter in tone than the previous works, the stories are anecdotic, portraying picturesque *kif* smokers, modern fables in which the rogue demonstrates his wit. Mrabet used to smoke *kif* to compose his stories, and so did Bowles, who wrote the passage of Port's death in *The Sheltering Sky* under the influence of *majoun*, a cake made of hashish paste. Although the stories have been branded as trivial,[131] one can easily imagine why they were appealing to an American readership at the end of the 1960s, increasingly familiar with the use of hashish. The stories read as an example of hippie Orientalism at a time in which Tangier was a popular destination among the hippies that found in the city the perfect site to experiment with drugs.

Translations also provided a source of inspiration to develop new composition techniques in Bowles's own fiction, as in the case of the stories included in *A Hundred Camels in the Courtyard* (1962). In these stories, he tried to experiment with the "arbitrary use of disparate elements" (*Conversations* 97). Regarding the alternative use of biographic elements and fiction, Bowles's would declare about Mrabet: "the Moroccans don't make much distinction between objective truth and what we'd call fantasy."[132]

In 1974 Mrabet and Bowles published together *The Boy Who Set the Fire and Other Stories*. The stories on this volume do not have an apparent link, but vary in tone and content. Some of them reincorporate elements such as *kif* smoking and witchcraft, two of them are largely autobiographical and some others explore the theme of vengeance. Noteworthy in this collection is the heavy incidence of violence and casual bloodshed. There are similarities between some short stories written by Bowles in this period and

[131] See Rountree, 395, and Dawood, 265.
[132] Interviewed by Martin Rogers for *The Rolling Stone*, reproduced in Allen Hibbard's *Paul Bowles: a Study of the Short Fiction*, 172.

Mrabet's, for example, the themes of *kif* and hallucination in *A Hundred Camels in the Courtyard* (1962) and the persistent interest in violence throughout most of his work.

Even though we find similarities between the collaborations and Bowles's own fiction, the influence works only one way. Mrabet could have not been influenced by Bowles's fiction because he could not read and did not speak English. Their similarities stem from their common interest in the clash between Westerners and Moroccans, their appreciation for the Moroccan tradition and their source of inspiration.

However, one might still claim that those translations were appropriations of a foreign patrimony. Tahar Ben Jelloun called the collaborations "a bastard literature," products of a "technique of rape" ("Une Technique de Viol" 21), insinuating that Bowles was taking advantage of those authors both sexually and culturally and that the authors were merely literary puppets in the hands of the American writer, who was the "real" author behind these texts. Bowles, who tried to be faithful to the texts in terms of style and rhythm[133] although he never hid that his translations were "far from literal" (*For Bread Alone* 5), always denied this accusation.[134] There are tapes and transcript drafts that prove the recording sessions that were the source for the translations;[135] in the case of Choukri, the original manuscript in Arabic exists and has been published and translated to other languages (it has been paradoxically translated to French by Tahar Ben Jelloun, who

[133] In 1963 Bowles wrote to Alan Ross from *The London Magazine* about a short story he was translating for Layachi, that it was just "an example of good storytelling: simple but not unsubtle." Bowles emphasized that his translation was "literal, sentence by sentence. I make have bent over backwards in trying to keep the language as stark as it is in the Moghrebi; however, I believed that to lend it any style whatever it would be to destylize it in effect" (*In Touch* 362).

[134] In "Symposium on Translation," which appeared in the summer 1997 issue of *The Threepenny Review,* Bowles declared that his relation with the Moroccan authors had ended badly due to their mistrust regarding money and royalties. He argued that translations never made much money due to the low sales and that he had been harassed by attorneys and denounced as "a spy for the CIA, a racist, a neo-colonialist, a dangerous criminal who ought not no be allowed to continue living in Morocco, and a robber whose considerable fortune had been amassed by depriving Moroccan writers of their royalties" (Quoted on *Writing in the Margins* 205).

[135] The Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Columbia University, Paul Bowles papers, 1940-1988; The University of Delaware Library, Paul Bowles Collection; The Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center, Paul Bowles Collection.

criticized Bowles's role as a translator); there is the testimony of Mrabet, who still dictates stories using the same procedure of transcribing *darija* and translating it to other languages. Regarding the accuracy of the translations, we have to consider that there is no such thing as an 'ideal' translation, all of them are adaptations of sorts. As Spivak has reflected, it is impossible to achieve an accurate translation. Far from that, we need to acknowledge the "irreducible hybridity of all language" (*A Critique of Postcolonial Reason* 163). The task of the translator consists, as Walter Benjamin reflected, in finding the original intention upon the target language "which produces in it an echo of the original" (*Illuminations* 76). In fact, Benjamin states that translation is an act of reciprocity between languages.

I have already alluded to the American reception of these texts. What about the Moroccan reception? It is difficult to know the original reaction when they first appeared. The translations were originally published in the U. S. and they were not available in Morocco at the time. Besides, the fact that English was the target language made it difficult for Moroccan readers to access these works. This language could be considered, borrowing Casanova's term, a "poisoned chalice" (Casanova 262); while it was a vehicle for publishing their texts, at the same time it restricted their local readership. However, English has become increasingly influential in Morocco in the last twenty years and postcolonial theory and Bowles's major works have been included in university syllabi since the 1990s.

The figure of Paul Bowles might remain controversial among Moroccan scholars. However, there are others who have praised his collaborations and his own works, considering him a transnational author, the starter of *al-adab at-Tanji* or Tangerine literature. The term *al-adab at-Tanji* was coined by Moroccan journalist Zubir Bin Bushta, who published several articles after Bowles's death in 1999. Bushta was the first to signal his influence in Moroccan letters, creating a new literary trend, a point of view that other

Moroccan authors maintain as well as the American scholar Brian T. Edwards.[136] This movement would include Choukri, Mrabet, and other contemporary writers such as Abdellatif Akbib, who writes in Modern Standard Arabic as well as in English and the francophone Sidi Mohamed El Yamlahi Ouazzani. Although the themes and style differ from one author to another, they all have a common interest for Tangier as a literary site and subject of their fiction and non-fiction. And they demonstrate that, to talk about Tangier, there is not a single *lingua franca*, as they communicate in different languages. The literary magazine *Nejma*, edited by Simon-Pierre Hamelin, which appeared in Tangier in 2006 for the first time, is the natural inheritor of this trend, featuring texts of Moroccan and foreign authors in French, Arabic, English and Spanish, celebrating the city as the "world literary space" that still is.

With the translations, Bowles put his language skills at the service of the work of others, setting aside his own literary work. Such expertise goes beyond the knowledge attained by simple travelers and it transcends Bowles's interest in Moroccan tradition. Translations might seem to belong to an ethnographic phase but they answer to a cosmopolitan sensitivity. They are the crack in the colonial façade, Bowles's contribution to the third space. The three stages –traveler, ethnographer, cosmopolitan– correspond with three different sensitivities or aesthetic approaches: the traveler's, concerned with external descriptions and the territory, in which the Western self and its dissolution is the protagonist; the ethnographer's stage, more concerned with traditions, in which intercultural encounters gain ground, though there is still a clash with the Other; and the cosmopolitan, where the intercultural exchange occupies the foreground, when expatriation becomes the permanent condition.

[136] See *Morocco Bound,* 86 and "Sheltering Screens: Paul Bowles and Foreign Relations," 307-334.

4.5. Transgression and displacement: Paul Bowles and the Beat Connection

Some months after producing his classic "Howl" (1956), Allen Ginsberg (1926-1997) landed in Tangier, March 1957. He was accompanied by Peter Orlovsky, and Alan Ansen joined them shortly. The choice of their destination was not accidental. Their friend William S. Burroughs (1914-1997) had been living intermittently in the city since 1954 and, after giving up drugs definitely in 1956, the writer was steadily working on *Naked Lunch*. By then, Paul Bowles was the most famous expatriate in town, where he had taken permanent residence in 1947. By the time Burroughs was living there, Bowles had already published his most famed novels. The first meeting between the two writers was delusory; it took place in July, 1955. Bowles was ill with typhoid when Burroughs went to see him to ask for advice on a problem with the royalties of *Junkie*. "Very nice," was all that Burroughs had to say about Bowles after the meeting.[137] Previously, the possibility of encountering him had provoked antagonistic feelings on Burroughs. Oliver Harris explains that one reason for Burroughs' interest in visiting Tangier had been his reading of Bowles's first two novels (Harris 195). His first letters to Ginsberg continuously refer to Bowles and the "writers' colony" (Harris 195), a "dreary tribe" (Harris 216). Burroughs felt these writers were leaving him aside on purpose (Harris 232). Displaced and high on drugs, Burroughs started to attach sinister connotations to the place.[138]

Bowles refers to the first meeting with Burroughs in his autobiography, *Without Stopping* (1972): "His manner was subdued to the point of making his presence in the room seem tentative" (*Without Stopping* 323). By the time Ginsberg and the rest arrived, they finally had come to know each other. Bowles writes on his biography how he introduced Burroughs to Brion Gysin, and in one of his interviews, he explains how Ginsberg and the

[137] Letter to Allen Ginsberg, dated July 5, 1955. *The Letters of William S. Burroughs: 1945-1959*, 277.
[138] *The Letters of William S. Burroughs: 1945-1959*, 195-6, 198, 215, 222-3, 243.

rest helped Burroughs in 1957 to rearrange the material for *Naked Lunch*, a large quantity of scattered pages that had being lying on the floor of his hotel room for months. In 1959 Bowles encountered Burroughs, Ginsberg, Gregory Corso, and Jack Kerouac in New York. He was quite impressed by the amount of attention and publicity they were receiving at that moment.[139] Burroughs went on living in Tangier till 1958 and returned briefly to the Moroccan town in 1959. Again in 1961, Burroughs went back. He was soon followed by Ginsberg, Orlovsky, and Corso; Tennessee Williams and Gysin were staying there as well. Bowles and Ginsberg travelled south and visited Marrakech together. And so was the Beat summer in Tangier.

Besides these autobiographical coincidences, the members of the Beat Generation and Paul Bowles shared something else apart from spending some time together in Tangier. That is, a common purpose: to shake the consciences of their contemporaries, to shock their society, and to transgress its codes. In order to do so, they chose to relocate and define themselves outside and against the American society they were criticizing. Significantly they chose Tangier as a setting, a place that challenged the notions of geography, language, and sexuality. The main aim of this chapter is to explore both the Beat Generation and Paul Bowles as key figures in the same project—to explore their often similar ways of looking at the world. This group of authors converge in their vision of America, its disregard for its values, their tedium with its culture, and their isolation from its society. If we consider the Beat Generation as a group of intellectuals that changed the American cultural landscape in the 1950s and paved the way for the advent of youth and pop culture in the following decades, we have to acknowledge that writers like Bowles made this generation aware of the dangers and limitations of the American dream. In order to do so he wrote not only about alienated characters who escaped American society looking for new experiences, but

[139] Paul Bowles, *Without Stopping*, 342-3.

also about the taboos of that society: violence, drugs and sex. Already in the 1950s, a young and belligerent Norman Mailer praised Bowles as responsible for opening up "the world of Hip" and letting in "the murder, the drugs, the incest, the death of the Square, the call of the orgy, the end of civilization."[140] Bowles himself alluded to his conscious drive to destroy the world; on an interview in 1975, he explained that much of his writing was "an exhortation to destroy" (*Conversations* 94) and that all he pretended with it was to "*help* society go to pieces, make it easy" (*Conversations* 96). For his part, Allen Ginsberg was trying to recover the Whitmanian energy of the national spokesman, and forcing America to confront itself in "Howl" (1956) and other poems, whereas William Burroughs launched himself on a series of radical novels[141] whose objective it was to make his readers aware of the dangers of mass control in contemporary society.

One of the main aspects in which both Bowles and some of the members of the Beat Generation resemble one another is their writing method, which, in addition, has much in common with the Surrealist principles of automatic writing. According to Allen Ginsberg, creativity expands through non-rational means and derangement of the senses—hallucinations, visions, drugs, and dreams. Relating to technique, Jack Kerouac practiced his own kind of spontaneous prose, preferring no "'selectivity' of expression but following free deviation (association) of mind into limitless blow-on-subject seas of thought."[142] Besides, Kerouac disregarded revisions and tended to avoid punctuation. On the other hand, Burroughs's writing principles were the most extreme among the Beat writers: he wrote much of his material for *Naked Lunch* under the direct influence of drugs that drove him to an intense hallucinogenic state. Aided by Brion Gysin, Burroughs developed in later

[140] Norman Mailer "Evaluations—Quick and Expensive Comments on the Talent in the Room," in *Advertisements for Myself* , 403-4.
[141] I am referring to *Naked Lunch* (1959) and the "Nova" trilogy: *The Soft Machine* (1961), *The Ticket that Exploded* (1962), and *Nova Express* (1964).
[142] Jack Kerouac, "Essentials of Spontaneous Prose," 57.

writings the 'cut-up' technique, which consisted on the random arrangement of writing materials, whether they were his own writings, newspaper clippings or pieces of advertisement.

Linked to Ginsberg's ideas on creativity is Bowles's concern with dreams. Bowles states in his autobiography and in several of his interviews that he extracted the material of his stories directly out of a dream. "It came in a second between waking and dream, or sleeping and waking […] I began to write with my eyes shut, of course" (*Conversations* 11-2). The habit of writing right after or before sleeping would accompany him throughout his life (*Conversations* 44). Besides, his approach to poetry is fundamentally unconscious. He wrote to Ira Cohen in 1975: "all poems are dreams. In the sense that the relationship between words and the relationships between thoughts operate as in dreams. One goes into reading a poem as one goes into living a dream, with no preconceived ideas, totally absorptive, and making no judgment until it is over."[143] In the case of drugs, he had also written some sections under the influence of *majoun*, a kind of fudge made of hashish paste. Bowles experimented with it for the first time in 1948 and decided to use it to describe Port's death in *The Sheltering Sky*. In *Without Stopping* he explains he was having difficulties trying to approach this subject, so "it seemed reasonable, therefore, to hand the job over the subconscious. It is certain that the *majoun* provided a solution totally unlike whatever I should have found without it," he adds (*Without Stopping* 279). Bowles similarly declared that in the final section of *The Sheltering Sky* he had written "without any thought of what I had already written, or awareness of what I was writing, or intention as to what I was going to write next, or how it was going to finish" (*Conversations* 88). This point recalls Kerouac's "free deviation of mind." Bowles also avoided revising his

[143] Gena Dagel Caponi, *Paul Bowles, Romantic Savage*, 212.

work[144] and in some of his later writings he experimented without punctuation—the three "Monologues:" "Tangier 1975" (1983), "Massachusetts 1932" (1983), and "New York 1965" (1986) are good examples. Although Bowles did respect the Beats (he praised Ginsberg's intellect and Burroughs's sense of humor) and he admired them because they seemed the real "new thing" (*Conversations* 191), he disapproved of their "carelessness" in their writing, their meetings to work together and their mutual, direct influence by means of their collaborations.

There is a common sensitivity between Bowles and the Beats towards America, a rebellious attitude towards their home soil. Bowles writes on his autobiography that his decision to leave America had been a "compulsive experience." He tossed a coin; heads meant abandoning college, parents, and homeland, and going to Paris. Tails meant taking a dose of barbiturates and leaving no note. It was 1929 and Bowles was nineteen.[145] Notwithstanding the fact that this episode –coolly exposed on his autobiography—echoes some kind of teenage drama, it also refers us to the importance placed on the unconscious that Bowles always claimed. Soon after tossing the coin, Bowles writes, he knew "at once, although I had no idea of what it was going to be, that I was about to do something explosive and irrevocable" (*Without Stopping* 77). In order to do so, he had a "plan to escape" (*Without Stopping* 78) that consisted on living in Paris almost without money and aided by a few letters of recommendation. In the 1920s, Paris was brimming with artists and was a literary referent for Bowles. Not in vain, he had published two poems in the French literary journal *transition* in 1928.[146] Even though Bowles was escaping *to* Paris to embrace avant-garde, what was he escaping *from*?

[144] "The first draft is the final draft. I can't revise," Bowles told Daniel Halpern on an interview. *Conversations*, 90.
[145] Paul Bowles, *Without Stopping*, 77-9.
[146] Eugene Jolas started editing *transition* in 1927. It was focused on experimental writing and Surrealist, Expressionist and Dada art. Authors published in this literary journal included Gertrude Stein, James Joyce,

The early poem "America," written in 1927, explores the anxieties the homeland caused for the teenage Bowles:

> The ribbed glass chambers where we live
> Our voluntary crystal shells
> Who is there here to complain?
> The white light of our flimsy prison
> Where we all lie languidly on taupe matting
> Hearing the scraping of dry fronds at the screen
> Where no insect flies nor scaly serpent moves
> The satin coverlets on our beds
> The rows of bottles with brittle stoppers
> Our windows with tiny panes
> Who is there to rebel?
>
> (*Next to Nothing* 12)

America is an oppressive, "flimsy prison," where everyone, including the author, lives cocooned inside "crystal shells." By writing this, Bowles rebelled against the world his father represented: the suburban, dictatorial, patronizing, and material world[147]. Here, a young Bowles experiences an early existentialist anguish, realizing how fragile existence is inside a glass cage, a cage that has replaced the natural wonders —"dry fronds," and animals—with superfluous, "brittle" elements— the "satin coverlets" and "taupe matting" of the chambers. Bowles opposes a world outside and a world inside a crystal cage in which humans lead a "voluntary" and languid existence. The voice of the poet seems unable to escape the glass prison and invokes someone to start complaining and rebelling.

André Breton, André Gide, Hans Arp, and Samuel Beckett. Paul Bowles published the poem "Spire Song" in the twelfth issue and "Entity," a surrealist fragment, in the thirtieth issue.

[147] For a good approach to the influence of childhood on Bowles's writings, see Gena Dagel Caponi, *Paul Bowles, Romantic Savage*, 7-39.

The young Bowles finally fled his country and settled amidst the Parisian bohemia. He writes in his autobiography that Paris was a "continual joy" (*Without Stopping* 85). The city's liveliness was a continuous source of excitement that made up for his dull job in the *Herald Tribune* offices as a telephone operator. After a walk through Paris, "a day in the cage would pass more swiftly" (*Without Stopping* 85). Even though his stay lasted less than a year he never contemplated going back to his parents or even asking them for money. But Bowles went back to America and his parents did not seem to hold a grudge against their son. In 1929 he began to study with Aaron Copland; the same year a dramatic incident took place at the Bowleses: over dinnertime, Bowles attacks his father. He retells the facts in his autobiography as follows: "I was astonished one night to discover that I had thrown a meat knife against my father" (*Without Stopping* 104).

All these early episodes present a transgressor and young Bowles that acted compulsively and felt his acts as they were taking place outside him, as a witness rather than an actor of his own deeds. He attributed this same condition to his characters, for whom their leaving America and their "urge to travel was a compulsive act" (*Conversations* 91). In the case of Nelson Dyar, the protagonist of *Let It Come Down* (1952), he was "fed up with his work in America. Fed up with standing on a teller's cage. Desire for freedom, I suppose; desire for adventure" (*Conversations* 91). He refers in the same terms to himself: the need to abandon America was a "*real* compulsion. Even as a small child, I was always eager to get away" (*Conversations* 116).

Bowles accompanied Copland to Paris in 1931. From there, they went to Morocco. After the Second World War, Bowles reaffirmed his choice to live abroad by taking up residence in a corner of the world in which he felt life was still, alien, and beautiful. Already in the 1930s he writes in his letters that Tangier is a "perfect place to live" (*In Touch* 82) and a town "too beautiful for words" (*In Touch* 83). Besides, in Fez, he always

felt "at home" (*In Touch* 181). In *Without Stopping,* he explains that his curiosity for such an alien culture was "a total experience […] avid and obsessive" (297). Besides, Morocco was a perfect destination in financial terms: "In the beginning [1947] everybody came here because you could live for nothing and get whatever you wanted" (*Conversations* 108). What Bowles perhaps could not know was that he was contributing to the advent of that cultural revolution with his pre-hipster writing, which, exploring key themes like violence, drugs, and alienation, fulfilled an expectation that had been long in his own mind; the idea, dating back to the time of his surrealist experiments with poetry, that art must have a revolutionary purpose. Not in vain, the same person who assured Bowles that Tangier was the place to go in 1931, was the same person who called him "pre hipster hipster," Gertrude Stein.

It would take the young Americans almost three decades, a Depression, another World War, and two atomic bombs, to accept the challenge and start complaining. In a letter to his publisher, Bowles compares Dyar, the main character of *Let It Come Down*, to 1950s discontented teens. Explaining that young Americans should find the novel particularly appealing, he writes that they do not follow the kind of antisocial attitude Dyar shows because of the "lack of opportunity and fear of the possible consequences" in their country (*In Touch* 239).

According to many critics, in particular Jonah Raskin,[148] the Beat Generation responded to the need of a cultural revolution in the ambivalent atmosphere after World War II, in which the Cold War, the Korean conflict, and McCarthyism did nothing but create the impression that another worldwide disaster was closing in. At the same time, as leaders of the Bohemian movement, they sought a domestic cultural revolution that would rid the country of the effects of commercialism and conformity.

[148] Jonah Raskin, *American Scream: Allen Ginsberg's* Howl *and the Making of the Beat Generation*, 10-35.

Also in 1955 Ginsberg produced his own "America," a poem that appeared along with some others in the controversial first edition of *Howl*. Ginsberg's approach has many things in common with Bowles's, although the tone differs. The pessimism of Bowles's adolescent poem is a far cry from Ginsberg's categorical rejection. "America when will we end the human war? / Go fuck yourself with the atom bomb." (*Howl* 31). Also, "America" is a declaration of principles for Ginsberg, the excuse to postulate his alternative set of values, in direct opposition to the conservative, middle-class mentality:

> America I used to be a communist when I was a kid I'm not sorry.
> I smoke marijuana every chance I get.
> I sit in my house for days on end and stare at the roses in the closet.
> When I go to Chinatown I get drunk and never get laid […]
> You should have seen me reading Marx.
> My psychoanalyst thinks I'm perfectly right.
> I won't say the Lord's Prayer.
> I have mystical visions and cosmic vibrations.
>
> (*Howl* 32)

In eight lines, Ginsberg is able to number most of the taboos of his age: sympathy for Communism, drug use, immoderate use of alcohol and sex, disregard for mainstream religion and working habits.

Yet the most interesting revelation from my point of view can be found just before the above quotation, a line in which Ginsberg writes: "Burroughs is in Tangiers I don't think he'll come back it's sinister" (*Howl* 31). It is difficult to determine the referent for the adjective "sinister," if it is either Tangiers, or the fact that Burroughs might not come back, or perhaps America. A few lines later, Ginsberg answers himself in the form of an interior monologue, in which the poetic voice becomes the sinister one:

> Are you being sinister or is this some form of practical joke?

I'm trying to come to the point
I refuse to give up my obsession."

His obsession being that life cannot go on in such a way, what is sinister is that people leave in order not to come back to an America which has allowed its "emotional life [to] be run by Time Magazine" (*Howl* 31). Finally, it is sinister because Ginsberg still feels himself *part of America*. Even at the end of his litany of aggressive questions, the poet needs to corroborate his own assertions with the question, "America is this correct?" (*Howl* 34).

Bowles knew he could not escape being American but he regretted the attachment. He was a foreigner in Morocco but also felt awkward in his own country. What basically differentiates Ginsberg from Bowles is that the former is much more positive about the U.S. than the latter: Bowles continued to consider America a disease, a trap from which there was no escape, and this is precisely the starting point of all his stories. He confessed in an interview in 1952: "I am writing about disease. Why?…because I am writing about today…not about what happens today, but about today itself […] This is certainly no time for anyone to pretend to be happy, or put his happiness away in the dark […] You must watch your universe as it cracks above your head" (*Conversations* 4-5). This cracking of the universe —the "crystal shells"— is a recurring image throughout Bowles's works. In the 1940 poem "Scene IV" he writes: "Release from duty, and a sedative / Remember the plan of escape. Be sure of the night / Rave and watch the slowly cracking glass" (*Next to Nothing* 57). Furthermore, we can interpret *The Sheltering Sky* as an extended metaphor of this continuous and slow cracking which comes to the devastating knowledge that the sky is no longer protecting the characters from anything so they are left to themselves to become mad and even die.

On the other hand, Ginsberg is less apocalyptic, although he is no less concerned. In "Who Will Take Over the Universe," written in 1961 some months before traveling to Tangier, Ginsberg declares: "America's spending money to overthrow the Man / Who are the rulers of the earth?" (*Collected Poems* 265). A similar question arises in a poem written in a boat on his crossing from Marseille to Tangier, "Sunset S.S. Azemour": "What powers sit in their domed tents and decree Eternal Victory?" (*Collected Poems* 287). Nevertheless, there is hope, something entirely absent from Bowles's writings. For the loving Ginsberg, America can redeem itself.[149] Ginsberg writes in "Who Will Take Over the Universe?":

> "The Revolution in America
> already begun not bombs but sit
> down strikes on top submarines
> on sidewalks nearby City Hall"
>
> (*Collected Poems* 265)

According to Ginsberg, a peaceful revolution, unlike the kind Bowles's portrays in *The Spider's House*, was already underway. By 1961, the Beat movement and its writers were already widely known,[150] and Ginsberg had accepted his role as the messenger of the revolutionary creed. In 1958, after returning from the long voyage that included Mexico City, Tangier, Paris, Amsterdam and London, Ginsberg told one of his first interviewers that he had come back "to save America. I don't know what from" (Carter 4). For his part, Bowles neither pretends to redeem nor to become the American savior; such a kind of pronouncement seems puerile compared to the pessimistic message Bowles sent through

[149] Ginsberg explained in an interview some years later: "By hindsight the interior of America is not bad, at least for me […] creepy, but it's not impossible. But traveling to countries like Cuba and Vietnam I realize that the people that get the real evil side effects of America are there […] it is really like imperialism in that sense" *Beat Writers at Work: The Paris Review Interviews*, 51.

[150] Bowles himself witnessed their popularity back in 1959 when he visited the U.S. (*Without Stopping*, 343). Bowles had decided that civilization was definitely coming to an end after a visit to Hollywood: "I felt that I was in the middle of a truly exotic culture, and perhaps one of the strangest of all time […] civilization had turned and begun to devour its own body […] It was both horrible and fascinating" (*Without Stopping*, 341).

his fiction: that modern society in general and America in particular were in a state of perennial decadence. America was increasingly becoming "more like the future […] The future would be infinitely "worse" than the present; and in that future, the future would be immeasurably "worse" than the future that we can see" (*Conversations* 116).

Despite Bowles claimed that it had a "therapeutic purpose,"[151] he has been often considered a "decadent" writer who overuses violence in his works. Another response was the statement that "whatever is intolerable must produce violence" (*Conversations* 92). At the same time, the author feels that his country had left him no other choice than to become an outcast, due partly to the contempt towards the artists in American society and also to its moral decadence. Bowles always resented the lack of respect towards the artists in the U.S., where any of them was considered an "outsider, a pariah. Naturally, if you were rejected, you rejected back" (*Conversations* 47). This is the logic of an eye for an eye: America has made of him a pariah, and as one he replies with the conscious desire of destroying it.

In one of his late stories, "Monologue, New York 1965," Bowles places us in the mind of the poet Kathleen Andrews, who likes "giving the world shock treatment that's what it needs people enjoy being scandalized more than anything else" (*Collected Stories* 620). This recalls the same Bowles, who performs the role of a "corrosive agent" (*Conversations* 96) without becoming a moralist. It is in the last stanza of the late poem "Next to Nothing" (1977) where this seems particularly evident:

> "I am the spider in your salad, the bloodsmear in your bread.
> I am the rusty scalpel, the thorn beneath your nail.
> Some day I shall be of use to you, as you can never be to me
> […]
> I am the wrong direction, the dead nerve-end, the unfinished scream

[151] *Conversations* 94-95.

One day my words may comfort you, as yours can never comfort me."

(*Next to Nothing* 71)

This section can be interpreted as a piece of advice to the reader: the poetic voice is the unpleasant, repulsive side of things; the one who reminds us that human existence is just an accident. Given Bowles's typical anonymity as a narrator, this declaration is particularly revealing; he wanted his readers to undergo the same epiphany Stenham, the protagonist of *The Spider's House*, had experienced:

> "He had lived in solitude and carefully planned ignorance of what was happening in the world. Nothing had importance save the exquisitely isolated cosmos of his own consciousness. Then little by little he had had the impression that the light of meaning, the meaning of everything, was dying. Like a flame under a glass it had dwindled, flickered and gone out, and all existence, including his own hermetic structure from which he had observed existence, had become absurd and unreal."
>
> (*The Spider's House* 195-6)

One again, the symbol of the glass appears, this time like a bell jar covering and suffocating the character's mind, suggesting that reason is powerless since existence is meaningless. Stenham is left guttering in the darkness of an absurd existence.

William S. Burroughs, "el hombre invisible,"[152] a renowned member of the Beat Generation and resident in Tangier for a crucial period of his career, shared with Bowles both the will to shock the reader and the rejection of the home soil. He wanted to be a "corrosive agent" too, to abolish the establishment, though by different means. In *Naked Lunch* and other writings Burroughs disguises himself as Lee, the covert agent who explores the endless intricacies of Interzone, his own particular hellish society. Burroughs, who believed that conspiracies were one of the main *leitmotifs* of modern life, thought the

[152] "The invisible man." This is how Tangerine kids used to call the writer due to his dark and inconspicuous appearance. Such nickname precedes Burroughs's literary persona in *Naked Lunch*, Lee the covert agent. Besides, as Timothy S, Murphy points out, such invisibility also represents Burroughs' uniqueness as a literary figure, a figure that does not fit into any category "subordinated to the larger scheme of capitalism" (*Wising Up the Marks* 4).

best way to avoid them was to create a system in which there was no place for any kind of mass control. He wrote in *Naked Lunch*: "Lee the Agent… is taking the junk cure… space time trip portentously familiar as junk meet corners to the addict… cures past and future shuttle pictures through this spectral substance vibrating in silent winds of accelerated Time" (*Naked Lunch* 218). Burroughs sought to eliminate the frontiers of time and space found in the traditional novel, juxtaposing different settings, melting several characters in one to divide them later, making past, present and future converge,[153] presenting, in Allen Ginsberg's words, "actual visions & actual prisons / as seen then and now" (*Collected Poems* 114). According to Burroughs, we cannot trust experience, as it can be altered by different means, drugs, for instance. I quote once more from *Naked Lunch*:

> "I recall once after an overdose of Majoun […] I look across the living room of that villa outside Tanger and suddenly don't know where I am. Perhaps I have opened the wrong door and at any moment The Man In Possession […] will rush in and scream: "*What Are You Doing Here? Who Are You?"* And I don't know what I am doing here nor who I am… Your knowledge of what is going on can only be superficial and relative."
>
> (*Naked Lunch* 220)

For Bowles all knowledge is "absurd and unreal," for Burroughs it is "superficial and relative." Yet Bowles and Burroughs have in common a sense of terror, the same awe about what is waiting behind the cracking glass or, in Burroughs's words, behind the "wrong door" (*Naked Lunch* 220). But even Burroughs is more of a social protester than Bowles. He seeks "to make people aware of the true criminality of our times, to wise up the marks. All of my work is directed against those who are bent, through stupidity or design, on blowing up the planet or rendering it inhabitable."[154] Creating characters such as Nelson

[153] "Sooner or later [all the characters] are subject to say the same thing on the same words to occupy…the same position in space-time" (*Naked Lunch* 222). Ginsberg corroborates the same idea in "Howl," dedicated, among others, to those who "dreamt and made incarnate gaps in Time & Space through images juxtaposed" (*Howl* 16).

[154] *Beat Writers at Work: the Paris Review*, 31.

Dyar, Bowles seeks to let us know how it feels to be one of them. Moreover, Burroughs also pursued the liberation of the word especially in his *Nova* trilogy (1961-1967), a set of three novels in which he employed thoroughly the cut-up method. By doing so, he sought to destroy the control system of syntax and to abolish the subduing power of the written word.[155] Burroughs had started to use the method during his years in Paris (1958-1960), developing an idea by Brion Gysin, who in turn had been influenced by the Surrealist experiments of the 1920s.[156] This was the kind of style Bowles had ruled out after his initial experiments with poetry.[157] Bowles is a romantic existentialist who becomes a classicist, Burroughs is a radical utopian, who uses his writing as a weapon, not to destroy the world, but to create an "imaginary world in which I would like to live in" (Plimpton 31).

The emphasis that Surrealism placed on dreams is another key element within the Bowles-Beat connection. In the 1924 Manifesto of Surrealism, André Breton explained that dream and reality, at first sight so contradictory, could come together as an "absolute reality, a *surreality*."[158] Breton also refers to Surrealism as a "*new vice*" that "acts on the mind very much as drugs do" (Breton 36). Besides, surrealist images come to the mind as if they were evoked by drugs: spontaneously. Bowles and the Beats, like many surrealists such as Antonin Artaud, enhanced dreamlike experience by the use of drugs, in Bowles's case Moroccan *kif* and *majoun*. The importance of dreams remained further apparent to Bowles long after he had rejected other surrealist elements.

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[155] "In *The Naked Lunch* and *The Soft Machine* I have diagnosed an illness, and in *The Ticket That Exploded* and *Nova Express* I suggested a remedy. In this work I am attempting to create a new mythology for the space age. I feel that the old mythologies are definitely broken down and not adequate at the present time… I do definitely have heroes and villains with respect to overall intentions with regard to this planet. Love plays little part in m mythology, which is a mythology of war and conflict" *Conversations with William S. Burroughs*, 11.

[156] Ted Morgan, *Literary Outlaw: The Life and Times of William S. Burroughs*, 321-5. Timothy S. Murphy, *Wising Up the Marks: The Amodern William Burroughs*, 104.

[157] Bowles had translated Paul Magritte's "Prose Poems" and five poems by Paul Colinet for the "Surrealism in Belgium" issue of *View* in 1946. Virginia Spencer Carr, *Paul Bowles: A Life*,170-1.

[158] André Breton, *Manifestoes of Surrealism*, 14.

Dreams repeatedly appear in Paul Bowles's fiction. In the early story "The Scorpion" (1945), an old woman dreams of a scorpion that enters into her mouth. Though at first she is terrified, when she realizes the scorpion is not going to sting her "a great feeling of happiness went through her" (*Collected Stories* 119). As Allen Hibbard points out, by the act of dreaming the character turns fear into "the acceptance of demonic forces."[159] The opening lines from *The Sheltering Sky* introduce Port Moresby awakening; in the realm of dreams Port reaches "another level of consciousness where the mere certitude of being alive was not sufficient" (*The Sheltering Sky* 9). Later, when he tells his dream to Kit and Tunner, Kit grows unexpectedly upset and frightened. Dreams become an escapist fantasy. In Bowles's opinion they respond to people's desire to lose consciousness. Nevertheless, in a letter written in 1951 he suggests that human beings are trapped anyway: "in sleep nothing is different; there is always the same cage around. One is conscious that one is dreaming, and that the same forces operate there as elsewhere."[160]

In the case of Paul Bowles and to a lesser extent, of the Beat writers, dreaming is related to geographical displacement and desire. As I have mention, Tangier literally came to Bowles in the shape of a dream, which virtually drove him to settle in the African town. Allen Ginsberg noted down in his journals a dream involving an orgy in Tangier, before setting foot in it[161]; and, according to Burroughs, Tangier was "like a dream extending from past into future, a frontier between dream and reality" (Harris 302). Burroughs reflects upon Tangier as his "dream town." His vision bears resemblance to Bowles's as this letter (1956) to Allen Ginsberg justifies: "I did have a dream ten years ago of coming into a harbour and knowing that this was the place where I desired to be… Just the other day, rowing around in the harbour I recognised it as my dream bay" (Harris 329-30). By

[159] *Paul Bowles: A Study of the Short Fiction*, 10.
[160] *In Touch: the Letters of Paul Bowles*, 232.
[161] *Journals-Early 50s Early 60s*, 209-10.

displacing themselves and stepping outside the threatening atmosphere of the U.S., they projected their unfulfilled desires into another reality, Tangier, transforming it into a 'surrealist' that no longer responded to the normal laws of time and space, and where experience tended to alter.

Geographical displacement and cosmopolitanism also play a very important role in "Howl," in which Ginsberg introduces two direct references to Tangier. Some of the members of Ginsberg's generation "destroyed by madness, starving hysterical naked" (*Howl* 9), "lounged hungry and lonesome through Houston seeking jazz or sex or soup, […] a hopeless task, and so took ship to Africa" (*Howl* 11), or "vanished into nowhere […] leaving a trail of ambiguous picture postcards of Atlantic City Hall / suffering Eastern sweats and Tangerine bone-grindings and migraines of China" (*Howl* 10). Ginsberg also refers to those who "retired to Mexico to cultivate a habit, or Rocky Mount to tender Buddha or Tangiers to boys" (*Howl* 15), a casual affirmation of sexual tourism practiced by some fellow Americans in North Africa such as Bowles never made in public, but Burroughs did. Burroughs optimistically writes to Ginsberg in a letter, dated 1954: "I am back in the Promised Land flowing with junk and boys" (Harris 241). With "Howl," Ginsberg introduced to the landscape of American letters the voices of dissent of those who preferred to become expatriates rather than stay at home by including these allusions to Tangier and to the African journey. Geographical displacement becomes a synonym of nonconformity.

According to Susan Sontag, in her essay "Questions of Travel" (1984), in modern travel writing there is a tendency to explore countries which have been or were being transformed by a revolution[162]. While Ginsberg visited many Communist countries during

[162] She points out that 'revolutionary' and 'primitive' are sides of the same coin, and that trips to countries considered either 'revolutionary' or 'primitive' are perceived as "journeys backward in time: leaving affluent,

the 1960s, Burroughs succeeded Bowles in residing and traveling through both Mexico and Morocco, but there is a considerable difference between Bowles's grave treatment of the violence of the independence struggle in *The Spider's House* (1955) and Burroughs's celebration of an atmosphere of riot. He refers to it as the "*jihad* jitters" in a revealing letter from 1956:

> "Yesterday I am sitting in the Socco and suddenly people start running and all the shop-keepers are slamming down the steel shutters of their shops… a few days ago we had a general strike…to walk around town with an Arab boy would be unthinkable at this point… I have a strange feeling here of being outside any social context. I have never known any place so relaxing. The possibility of an all-out riot is like a tonic, like ozone air… I have no nostalgia for the old days in Morocco, which I never saw […] The chaos in Morocco is beautiful. Arab hipsters are developing in Casablanca."
>
> (Harris 339)

The image of the slammed steel shutters is recovered in the end section of *Naked Lunch*, precisely immersed in the euphoric roar of the end pages: "This book spills off the page in all directions, kaleidoscope of vistas, medley of tunes and street noises, farts and riots yipes and the slamming steel shutters of commerce… Radio Cairo screaming… and flutes of Ramadan fanning the sick junky" (*Naked Lunch* 229). The book is thus praised as an apocalyptic call to chaos and as a multilayered juxtaposition of noises and images from different origins as perceived by Lee, Burroughs' literary alter ego. Eventually, Tangier –or Interzone—becomes a subtle setting for *Naked Lunch*, inspired by its dreamlike qualities: "the meaning of Interzone, its space-time location is at a point where three-dimensional fact merges into dream, and dreams erupt into the real world… The very exaggeration of routines is intended to create this feeling [last sentence crossed out]. In Interzone dreams can kill—Like Bangout [in *Naked Lunch*'s "the market" section]—and solid objects and persons can be unreal as dreams" (Harris 300).

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doubt-stricken civilization for the simplicities, pieties, and materially Spartan life of an earlier age" (*Where the Stress Falls* 278).

Whereas in the case of *Naked Lunch* the displacement takes place by means of abolishing time and space, so everything happens in the same ecstatic, "frozen moment," Bowles places his characters in an alien environment that, according to him, has managed to survive untouched by 'civilization.' Even if Bowles was immersed in what Edward Said defined as the "collective day-dream of the Orient,"[163] that is, a set of preconceived ideas about the Orient that its enthusiasts shared, Bowles rectifies what Said disparagingly called "oriental timelessness."[164] Time and place in Bowles link man to existence as we know it; in *The Sheltering Sky* Port has made "the fatal error of coming hazily to regard time as non-existent. One year was like another year. Eventually everything would happen" (*The Sheltering Sky* 105). When Port awakens from his illness shortly before dying, he has already lost any sense of time and place: "Sometimes I'm not here, and I don't like that. Because then I'm far away and all alone. No one could ever get there. It's too far. And there I'm alone" (*The Sheltering Sky* 173). Port finally sees the glass cracks. In his last moments, he enters and steps out of the darkness of the non-being, more aware than ever of the fact that there is nothing behind the screen which is the sky. When the glass finally shatters, when it is obvious the sky does not offer any shelter, the characters are somehow liberated, but liberated only to annihilation. In the poem "Next to Nothing" (1977) Bowles writes that we want to believe "the darkness would stay outside. We are not it, we said. It is not in us" (*Next to Nothing* 70), but in fact, everything in his fiction indicates the complete opposite.

The author of such nihilistic intuitions may seem to embody the "American existentialist" who, in Norman Mailer's words, had realized that "to the intolerable anxiety that death being causeless, life was causeless as well, and time deprived of cause and effect

[163] A notion developed by V. G. Kiernan. Edward Said, *Orientalism*, 52.
[164] Edward Said, *Orientalism*, 55, 167.

had come to a stop" (*Advertisements for Myself* 282).[165] Bowles explained in an interview in 1975 that as a "corrosive agent" he wanted to "Yank the rug out from under [the readers'] feet. If they come back for more, then I've succeeded" (*Conversations* 95). *The Sheltering Sky* was published in 1949, and, only six years later "Howl," the classic that would set on fire the (best) minds of a whole generation, appeared on the shelves of the bookshops. "Howl" was in a sense the reverse of existentialism; by declaring "everything is holy! everybody's holy! everywhere is holy! everyday is in eternity! Everyman's an angel!" (*Howl* 21), Ginsberg declared God was everywhere, echoing the American transcendentalist tradition. At the same time, though, "Howl" was a cry of despair and alienation that captivated the attention of those who felt like outsiders inside the American system. Ginsberg reflects on the positive effects of Beat poetry upon society. In the essay "Poetry, Violence and the Trembling Lambs or Independent Day Manifesto" (1959), Ginsberg writes that for once "there is a crack in the mass consciousness of America […] America is having a nervous breakdown" (3).

There is certain positivism implicit in the literatures produced by the Beats of which Ginsberg is the most prominent example. Even if the Beats' non-conformist attitude and desire to beat society are also present in Bowles's work, and even if they do share some themes in their fiction and poetry—like sex and drugs—and the technique of automatic writing, for Bowles there was no redemption possible. Furthermore for some of the members of the Beat Generation, travel was mainly another way to redeem themselves, both in its 'transamerican' version —in *On the Road* (1957), by rediscovering an unexpected America— as well as in its transatlantic counterpart.[166]

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[165] For further information on the hipster or "American existentialist," see Norman Mailer, "The White Negro: Superficial Reflections on the Hipster" in *Advertisements for Myself* , 227-328.

[166] Besides Ginsberg's allusions in "Howl," more example of transatlantic eagerness can be traced in *And the Hippos Were Boiled in Their Tanks*, written by Burroughs and Kerouac in 1945 and remained unpublished until 2009. The character of Philip Tourian wants to leave behind his old life and friends by sailing to the

In the late 1950s, Morocco and especially Tangier's choice as a locus represented the best alternative possible for traveling nonconformists. Against a dehumanized, totalitarian and coercing America, Tangier was a "paradise of noninterference"[167] in Burroughs' words: drugs were abundant, homosexual sex was available and the town itself was a liminal space in which exoticism coexisted with Western commodities. Nevertheless, Bowles's 'transaharian' experience goes beyond fashionable alienation. His displacement turned out to be a permanent exile. According to Edward Said, the sadness provoked by exile is insurmountable and that "The achievements of exile are permanently undermined by the loss of something left behind forever" ("Reflections on Exile" 173). Yet Bowles's exile produced his bitter but enlightening fruits. His more austere art of permanent tension remains.

In the already mentioned "Monologue, New York 1965," a short story written in the 1980s, the woman protagonist, a poet, is reminded by a friend: "don't you see that in the end they're not going to take anything you say seriously you're going to be some sort of freak" (*Collected Stories* 620). On the contrary, the Beats's transgressive message soon became part of the mainstream. In a letter posted on May, 1962, Bowles explained to Ginsberg how the Medina was then stuffed with "Eighthstreetniks" who had rented houses; "Bill was right: it's a real invasion, like nothing that has come before" (*In Touch* 338). A year later, he commented that a crew of NBC news had come to shot a "beat story," without any results. Therefore, the Tangerine Beat summer of 1961 provoked an avalanche of young people who paved the way for the hippies in the years to come.[168] The Beat Generation somehow failed when it became part of the mass market. To read about sex and

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occupied France. Jack Kerouac and William S. Burroughs, *And the Hippos Were Boiled in Their Tanks: a Novel*, 17-8.

[167] William S. Burroughs, *Interzone*, 54.

[168] Years later, the Beats would be scared of the same thing happening in the Beat hotel in Paris. See *The Penguin Book of the Beats*, 474.

drugs does not seem shocking any longer. In its pessimism, Bowles's message seems much more contemporary, definitely transgressor and forever threatening: being and nothingness remain eternally confronted.

4.6. *Points in Time:* the search of a cosmopolitan compromise

Less canonical than other works, *Points in Time* (1982) has received less attention on the critics' side than Bowles's novels and short stories.[169] More experimental in form,[170] it is difficult to frame it within a genre, as it fluctuates between fiction and non-fiction. Gena Dagel Caponi has drawn a parallelism between *Points in Time* and Bowles's cut-up experiments of the 1960s, when he used disparate elements to create his *kif*-inspired stories collected in *A Hundred Camels in the Courtyard* (1962).[171]

Bowles chose to define it as "lyrical history" (*Conversations* 195). Whose history? Morocco's, of course. The book is divided into eleven sections that arguably cover "episodes" that illustrate the last twenty-four centuries of the North African country. Above all, the book hails Morocco as a cultural crossroads since early times, a site for cultural approaches and clashes, whether Carthaginian, Roman, Moor, Spanish, Portuguese, American or French. When asked by Allen Hibbard about the aim of the narrative, he explained: "I meant it to be a journey across time, with stops here and there along the way; naturally, I chose stops which interested me" (*In Touch* 510). These 'stops' are episodes, postcards from the past, some of them a few sentences long, some a few pages long. They

[169] See Gena Dagel Caponi, *Paul Bowles, Romantic* Savage, 200-201; Christopher Sawyer-Lauçanno, *An Invisible Spectator*, 417-418; Richard F. Patteson, *A World Outside*: *The Fiction of Paul Bowles*, 76-77.
[170] In a letter to Bowles, Allen Hibbard pointed out at the similarities between *Points in Time* and *In the American Grain* (1925), by William Carlos Williams, which is a collection of essays based on historical figures that have contributed to the formation of America in someway. Bowles answered that he could see the similarity but that he had not thought about it beforehand, otherwise he would not have written it at all (*In Touch* 510).
[171] See Gena Dagel Caponi, *Paul Bowles, Romantic Savage*, 200.

are organized chronologically: the source of the first texts is Carthaginian, the last one apparently dates from the 1980s.

Unlike the rest of Bowles's non-fiction, the author mentions in some cases the source material that inspired the episodes. He maintained that whatever he had written was actually a historical fact. "I gave it flesh, naturally" (Sawyer-Lauçanno 417). His last work of importance is not based on a real voyage or a real experience, like most of his early novels and short stories. It is an imaginary travel, a product of his readings and his own ideas. He defined the volume as "somewhat" historical, as he hated doing research. In his rather cryptic way, he explained that he read and then took long walks with a tape-recorder. "I find invention that way" (*Conversations* 195). However, the history beyond some of the episodes remains obscure. Caponi suggests that he might have been inventing some of the facts, as when he edited the primitivist special issue of the magazine *View* that included his translations, texts and photographs of Central and South America in 1945, where he included two purportedly Mexican documents, inventing one of them.[172] As this is the work that has received the least attention from Bowles's critics, I think it is worth analyzing it in depth, going back to the original sources in the cases in which it is possible to find the differences and the motivations behind the change of elements. When Bowles said that he had chosen 'stops' that interested him, he was re-creating his own image of Morocco throughout the centuries, finding or highlighting the same elements that were characteristic of his fiction and non-fiction works: body violence, traditional beliefs, cross-cultural encounters, journeys, exile, and the power of time to change things.

Some of the texts resemble travel essays, as they are references to landscapes and the human element is almost absent. Section I includes five short texts referring to places or landscapes that evoke the rhetoric of discovery of travel narratives. The footnote at the end

[172] See Gena Dagel Caponi, *Paul Bowles, Romantic* Savage, 104-105.

of the book mentions Hanno the Carthaginian as the source for the geographical features that were recorded by the explorer in his voyages, which might have taken place between 7th-4th century B.C., that have arrived to our times thanks to the works of the Roman author Pliny the Elder. The mention of Hanno can only refer to the first text of Section I, as the rest of them include later historical references.

All these texts are inconclusive, barely a few sentences long. By means of their enigmatic nature, they exude a certain air of mystery. The referent behind the protagonist of each episode is undisclosed, reduced to a simple "he" or "they," even "we." The first episode begins as follows: "After half a day's voyage they came to a large lake or marsh. No such place now exists" (9). In all these texts there is usually a reference to past and present: before there was something that has no longer remained. Who is the intrusive historian who compares past and present? The constant references and comparisons to the present hide an implicit narrator, Bowles's expert voice behind the curtain, once again as the invisible spectator. Sometimes it appears disguised as a collective "we," as a time traveler that had participated in the adventures and misfortunes of the old times: "The old cemetery by the grottoes has been despoiled. To our great grief they have converted it into ploughed land" (*Points in Time* 13).

The date of the fictionalized events can be only traced through toponyms, as in the case of the second episode, which begins as follows: "Another road lead from Tocolosida to Tingis" (11), without mentioning which was the first road. Tingis was the Roman toponym for Tangier, and Tocolosida was a Roman settlement whose exact location, as Bowles mentions, remains unknown. Another place-name that appears in this first section is Asana, a toponym associated to the Sous that Pliny included in his accounts. Somehow it is a mythic place situated in a region that travelers used to romanticize. In his *Moghreb-el-Acksa* (1898), Cunninghame Graham mentions that "All sorts of legends thus sprang up

about the place: demons inhabited it; a mountain spoke; magicians not a few lived near the Wad Nun; La Caba, the daughter of Count Julian, who brought the infidel to Spain, was buried in Tarudant, as the legend says; and everything throughout North Africa, strange and miraculous, occurred in Sus" (Cunninghame Graham 348).

The fourth 'episode' in this section includes allusions to a Sultan that was defeated in Sierra Morena. It might refer to the Almohad caliph Muhammad an-Nasir, who was defeated in the battle of Las Navas de Tolosa by Alfonso VIII of Castile in 1212. Although it refers to a discussion he maintained regarding the epistle of Saint Paul with the Spanish king, I have not been able to ascertain the veracity of this episode. But it is interesting to notice that Bowles was aware of the past of Morocco as part of a larger empire, the Almohad, which in the 11th century ruled over the coast of North Africa and half of the Spanish peninsula. With the inclusion of this episode, he was perhaps suggesting that "the Moors" had been colonizers in the days of old, not only victims of colonization in the 19th and 20th centuries.

The East-West connection is explored in many of the episodes with cross-cultural encounters that usually end violently. Section II is entirely devoted to a single story, the misadventures of Fra Andrea of Spoleto in Fez, a monk that went to the city to evangelize Muslims but, because of his arrogance, got caught in a theological dispute with the Jews of the city, who denounced him as a sorcerer to the sultan, who in turn proceeded to execute him; less cryptic than the first episodes, it takes the form of a traditional tale with introduction, climax and ending. A note at the end of the book clarifies the historical reference: Fra Andrea existed and there is a Latin record of his martyrdom that dates back to 1532. Bowles also quotes the Spanish translation of 1543 to which he must have had

access.[173] In the original source, the dispute with the Jews is not mentioned but Fra Andrea is subject to different tortures by decree of the king, after trying to convert him and his court to the Christian faith: first they put him in a well with lions, but he escapes unscathed; then they try to burn him in a big bonfire, but God prevents the flames from touching him. Finally, one of the men in the mob throws a stone to his head and cracks his brain open, killing him instantly. The devout and sentimental original contrasts with Bowles's dispassionate narrative, in an act of appropriation that reads as a story of his own. In fact, it resembles Bowles's most known plot: the Westerner who goes to Morocco with his own naïve preconceptions about the place and who wishes to master the culture only to find death. Fra Andrea embodies the learned and ethnocentric Westerner that, instead of trying to approach a culture with a dialoguing attitude, approaches it with pride and overconfidence. The passage of his death represents the Bowlesian quintessence with his bare, elegant, and unforgiving prose: "Fra Andrea was given no opportunity of defending himself against the charges, but was thrown straightway into a cell where they tortured him for a few hours. Finally, someone impaled his body on a lance" (*Points in Time* 23).

Other sections also involve journeys into unknown regions and the problems the travelers encounter, sometimes from the point of view of the Westerner and sometimes from the point of view of the Other. Section III also explores the troublesome relation East-West through a series of eight loosely connected episodes that explore the theme of piracy and slavery in Morocco. In an indirect way, Bowles narrates the expulsion of the Morisco communities of Spain at the beginning of the 17th century, when they were deported to Rabat and Salé, where "they were at a great disadvantage" (*Points in Time* 27), because they did not know the language. In a few lines, Bowles is able to evoke the nostalgic overtones of exile: "Shoubilia, Gharnatta, Kortoba, Magherit, fell under the years, to be

[173] Antonio de Olave, *Thesauro de virtudes compilado por un religioso portugez, Sigue el Martyrio de Fr. Andres de Espoleto en Fez*. Medina del Campo: Pedro de Castro, 1543.

remembered at dusk by exiles in Fez […] Here the sun was hotter and the waves higher than at home in Almería or Motril. The fishing, at least, was good. At night, in the boats, the men could talk" (*Points in Time* 27).

Those Moriscos soon became corsairs, attacking Spanish ships. When James I came to throne in England and Scotland he banned privateering against Spain, and many Western privateers took to piracy and joined forces with the Moriscos from Salé and Rabat. Then they started to attack other ships as well, and, while the Sultan maintained diplomatic contacts with the English denying any implication, the pirates frequently took British prisoners for ransom or to be sold as slaves.[174] Some of the episodes included in this section are written from the third person. In others appear the collective "we." One of them takes the form of an entry in a binnacle: "Heavy sea and a gale from the east. An English privateer sailed into the bay at daybreak. We dispatched four men to bring the ship into harbour" (*Points in Time* 32).

Section IV also falls into the category of cross-cultural clash. It selects an incident from a 19th century British travel narrative[175] that illustrates the principle of the eye for an eye in the Moroccan law system. Like Fra Andrea's, this episode is told in the third person in the manner of a tale, and tells the deeds of Andrew Layton, a British merchant who had accidentally broken two teeth of a Chleuh woman. He was denounced to the Caliph and, to appease the mob, he had two molars removed from the merchant and later became his friend. Even though the story is narrated in the third person, there is one reference to the present at the beginning: "The sound of the sea on the wind blowing through the streets of Essaouira today is the same as it was two hundred years ago" (*Points in Time* 39). Again, the invisible voice that brings the past into the present emerges.

[174] See C. R. Pennell, *Morocco, From Empire To Independence*. 93-96.
[175] James Grey Jackson, *The Empire of Morocco*, London: William Bulmer & Co., 1809, 222-224.

In other sections we appreciate Bowles's taste for the traditional Moroccan culture, such as saints and *jnūn*. It is the case of Section V, where he tells in brief sketches fictionalized excerpts of the life of different saints. In this occasion Bowles does not offer any footnotes. I have only been able to trace one of the saints in Westermarck's *Ritual and Belief in Morocco*, Sidi Ali Ben Harazem, who lived in a cave outside Fez near a spring. Bowles tells us that his students were frightened of *jnūn*, whose presence is frequent in the proximity of water. The saint replied that their prayers would appease their enemies, turning them into friends. Bowles is exerting his ethnographic knowledge that he had mastered through his journeys and readings, which were the source material for many of his fiction works, as I have explored in the previous section of this dissertation.

Section VI formally takes the shape of a traditional folktale: "A century and a half ago, in one of the twisting back streets of the Mellah in Fez, there lived a respectable couple [whose daughter had] been favoured with exceptional beauty" (*Points in Time* 51). Bowles is referring, as he manifests in a footnote at the end of the book, to a widespread and well-documented episode that took place in 1834 in Tangier, not in Fez. In this case, no foreigners participate in the event. Sol Hachuel was a Jewish girl who married a Muslim, thus converting to Islam. Used to walking around the town freely, she could not face a life inside a Muslim household and ran away. She was accused of apostasy and publicly executed. The episode takes its inspiration from the written sources mentioned by Bowles. Besides, Sol Hachuel was also the subject of an Orientalist painting by Alfred Dehondecq, entitled "Execution of a Moroccan Jewess" (1860), and of a song by Françoise Atlan in her album *Romances Sefardies* (1992). In the original sources, Sol was a heroine, an example of virtue. Apparently, she was accused on a false claim from a neighbor to have converted to Islam and to have abandoned the faith. When the Khalifa gave her the opportunity to convert truly, she refused and was beheaded. In other versions, the Khalifa falls in love

with her and asks her to convert to Islam so she can marry him. When she refuses, he beheads her. In a similar way to Fra Andrea's episode, Bowles transforms the pious and romanticized account to adapt it to his own views. Sol Hachuel becomes the outsider who, after a voluntary though disappointing incursion in the culture of the Other, tries to goes back to her own people with fatal consequences. It also provides a vehicle to narrate an episode involving physical violence, as it is the case of the next episode.

Section VII offers another episode based on written sources whose protagonists are Moroccan. Edmondo De Amicis refers to it in *Morocco* (1882) as the "famous history of the bandit Arusi" based on "a real and recent fact" as it was told by his companion Selim (*Morocco* 313). Both authors tell us the story of El Aroussi or Arusi. He was a handsome young man from Fez that Cheikh Abdeljbar, one of the local chiefs, hated to death. He blamed him for sinking a French vessel and he was sent to jail. After escaping, El Aroussi ran to the forest of Mamora, near to the main residence of the Cheikh, and raised havoc in the region. In the meantime, the Cheikh promised his daughter Rahmana to the son of the Pacha of Salé. El Aroussi attacked the bridal procession and kidnapped the bride. Soon, the Cheikh men found him and took him to his master and the bridegroom. They cut the captive's toes and tossed them "one by one into El Aroussi's face" (*Points in Time* 61). When they were discussing further tortures, the captive escaped. They found him dead with Rahmana, who mourned his death until she was able to flee his father's castle. This time both narratives coincide almost point by point. However, in the dissimilarities we are able to trace how Bowles introduced some of his favorite subjects, as body violence. Whereas Bowles reproduces the toes' cutting episode almost word by word, De Amicis does not mention the further tortures that the cheikh and the bridegroom imagined. Bowles gives his imagination free range and displays his taste for gore and violence: the cheikh wanted to cut "a horizontal line around El Aroussi's waist and they flaying him, pulling the skin

upwards over his head and eventually twisting it around his neck to strangle him." Sidi Ali preferred to "cut off his ears and nose and force him to swallow them, then to slash open his stomach, pull them out and make him swallow them again" (*Points in Time* 61). Along with immoderate use of violence, Bowles portraits the cheikh as someone whose arrogance prevented him from capturing El Aroussi sooner: if he had not been so busy "perched above the town in his towers, [speaking] only with men of importance, like himself" (58), he would have known his whereabouts; if he had spoken with the peasants working on his land "he might have been able to identify the new bandit chief" (59). In De Amicis' account there is no hint of homosexuality, whereas Bowles makes the cheikh hate the handsome El Aroussi because he had "repulsed the older man's attempt to seduce him" (57).

Other sections that involve only Moroccan characters are Section IX and Section X. In the footnote at the end of the book, Bowles mentions that the source events for Section IX were some incidents that took place in the 1960s and 1970s, but I have not found any historical evidence confirming his assertion. The episode takes the form of the traditional Bowlesian story involving no Western characters, although the Spanish are mentioned at the beginning. It is a "story" about a young man that is killed by a stag during his wedding. As he had already paid for the dowry, his father wanted one of this other sons to marry the girl, who wants to go back to his hometown. The three of them refused, as they believed the stag would come to kill them if they did as it had done with their brother. The father marries the girl himself and dies a year later, although no deer is involved in his death.

Section X is formally similar to Section IX. With no foreign characters, it tells the story of a rogue, a peasant named Hattash from the Anjra region, near Tetouan. Bowles maintains that the events happened in 1980, although it is difficult to guess the source. It could be a story that someone had told him, a method he had previously used to get

inspiration for his short stories. Hattash is the typical trickster of Bowles's short stories that uses his wit to deceit his preys and get their money. His favorite victims are foreigners, that is, anyone who does not live in his village. It is noticeable that the folk element, the traditional belief, is absent from this story. Perhaps it was Bowles's way of saying that traditions have abandoned Morocco in the 20th century.

Section VIII moves to an entirely different subject and focuses on the colonizers in the recent history of Morocco: France and Spain. The formal lyricism of these short texts represents a sharp contrast with the harshness of the content, in which the natives frequently massacred the colonizers. Here is one example:

> "A certain night the air was heavy with jasmine, and the bodies of Frenchmen and their families were left lying along the roads, under the cypresses in the public gardens, among the smoking ruins of the little villas. While it was still dark, a breeze sprang up."
>
> (*Points in Time* 70)

One might argue that Bowles was presenting the colonizers as victims of the colonial conflict. However, in the Bowlesian trend, they are just another example of the foreigners who came to conquer, to interpret, or to mingle with a culture with naivety, without taking into account the dangers they might encounter.

The United States also appears in a song whose original version in *darija* Bowles translated. Even though the United States did not colonize Morocco *de facto*, the imperialist presence was important in the 1940s and throughout the 1950s, when the song was popularized. Although Bowles does not mention it, the song is called "Al Mirikan" and it was written by the Moroccan folksinger Houcine Slaoui. According to Brian T. Edwards,[176] World War II represented the introduction of Americans and their products in the Maghrebi market and the introduction of Maghrebi markets to America. Edwards

[176] See "Sheltering Screens: Paul Bowles and Foreign Relations" (2005).

notices that the concept of Morocco as a new market was commented by the American press of the time as a reapplication of the frontier myth. Morocco was a virgin land where to export Coca-Cola, Camel cigarettes and chewing gum. Written shortly after the Anglo-American meeting, known as the Casablanca Conference (1943), to discuss the progress of World War II, the song proves that Moroccans noticed the arrival of consumer culture. Even if Bowles does not offer further comments apart from the lyrics, the inclusion of Slaoui's song indicates that he felt that the arrival of the U.S. to Morocco had marked a rupture in its history.

Section XI is the last episode in the book. A very short text, it is a cryptic landscape description: "The river runs fast at the mouth where the shore is made of the sky, and the wavelets curl inward fanwise from the sea" (*Points in Time* 89). Bowles chooses a circular structure, ending his journey through time as he had begun it more than twenty centuries ago, with a landscape, an almost immutable feature. If everything else had changed, if travelers, merchants and conquerors had left, rivers, lakes and mountains would remain.

Although *Points in Time* occasionally resembles travel narrative in style and takes material from travel writing sources, the author rejected the idea of the book being a collection of travel essays, but rather a "reportage" in which there was no narrative thread. "It's something like a necklace with charms hung on it. Pearls if you prefer" (*Conversations* 195). In his lyrical history, Bowles is able to reproduce many tropes that fascinated the former travelers, like the harem descriptions (story of Sol Hachuel), stories involving pirates, or examples of Moroccan justice, transforming and adapting them to his own style. There is a multiplicity at the level of content, as the subjects are completely varied. But at the formal level the multiplicity also becomes evident. In the different sections, he plays with different formats: binnacle, chronicle, travel account, folktale, song… It is also a compendium on Bowles's literary interests throughout his entire career.

The "stops" in Moroccan history that caught his attention where those with which he could identify his own imagination, such as the crude images of violence. Thus, the two molars the British businessman has removed recall the severed tongue from "A Distant Episode." But we have also found passages where the protagonists are saints, *jnūn,* holy mad men, rogues, or adventurers.

In this sense, *Points in Time* represents the fragmentation of the 'grand narratives.' At the same time, it acts as a correlate of the multiple and cosmopolitan composition of Moroccan past and present.

According to Caponi, "in this slim volume Bowles's experiences as a poet, composer, ethnologist, and novelist coalesce into the mature expression of his artistry" (Caponi 201). I will add that the sensitivities of the traveler, the ethnologist and the cosmopolitan collide.

Bowles positions himself in the tradition of the Orientalist travel writers that were fascinated by Morocco but somehow subverts the tradition, offering a fragmentary account, where the possible Oriental fantasies end abruptly and violently. From the point of view of the ethnologist, he fictionalized real or invented characters and traditions, and put history to his own service.

Regarding violence, far from offering a sadomasochistic reading of Morocco, as some of the early reviews considered,[177] Bowles's violence has a cathartic purpose, even cosmopolitan, as Alexa Weik has pointed out. Through his particular 'shock therapy' he tries to teach American readers that "a lack of intercultural sensitivity and critical self-reflection can be fatal when exercised in the wrong kind of environment" (Weik 165).

[177] See Robert Craft, "Pipe Dreams," *The New York Review of Books*, Nov. 23, 1989, 6-12.

I do not agree with critic Robert F. Patteson when he says that the retelling of these episodes "testifies forcefully that his efforts to make Moroccan society more comprehensible to Westerners have not abated," that he was still trying "to make the foreign less strange" (*A World Outside* 76). *Points in Time* is definitely part of the Bowlesian project of presenting Morocco to the West, but it has multiple readings that obscure the aim of the book. Perhaps, in his old age, Bowles felt the need to justify his fascination for the country and his presence on it. But I think his purpose was to present his own history of Morocco and his own relation and understanding of the place and its people, like a literary testament to posterity, a synthesis of his life-work. Besides, we cannot forget that he included himself in the narrative, using an ambiguous 'we,' as if we were looking to find a place in the interstices of history. Bowles embodies a kind of hidden bard, looking to be the spokesman for Morocco as a literary space he helped to popularize within Western imagination. He surveys these episodes as the time traveler that experienced Moroccan history through imagination.

Bowles's narrative voice becomes dissolved in the making of the place and in the process of creating his own history. The subject of the dissolution of the self, so present in Bowles's fiction, takes a new dimension. This time it is Bowles's persona that becomes dissolved, merging with the cross-cultural interstices of Morocco's history. In this sense, he becomes part of the place, embodying different subjectivities that collide in the process of place-making, adding a new cosmopolitan dimension to his work. If his collaborations and translations with Moroccan authors had been a transnational experiment, the postmodern fragmentary voice in *Points in Time* gives way to a cosmopolitan dissolution of the self.

As I argued in the initial section of this thesis, timelessness is one of the main features of Orientalism: trying to captivate the essence of a culture in a temporal impasse that does not change throughout the centuries, considering the Orient a fixed entity, frozen

in time. By merging past and present, Bowles was reinterpreting the idea of timelessness, but not in the Orientalist sense. As a matter of fact, he was exerting a kind of extra-temporal cosmopolitanism, a historic, cosmopolitan approach to the country to which he devoted most of his writings. In *Points in Time* we do not find any praise for the local, for the picturesque, for the difference between 'us' and 'them;' only the acknowledgement that Moroccan culture is a superposition of multiple Others, and different foreign elements. Writing this lyrical history, Bowles positioned himself nearer than ever to being an insider in this culture, a foreign citizen of Morocco, but as so many others who have shaped the history of the country, as another element in the chain.

Whit this fine example of cultural crossroads, Bowles was presenting Morocco, in Bhabha's words, as a transnational and translational culture. In this sense, Bowles produced a literary experiment that contributed to reach beyond Western ethnocentrism and Manichean polarities, a middle ground to undo the binary oppositions between East and West, the First and the Third worlds. If timelessness was an Orientalist device to fix the Other in a temporal receptacle, as people without history, Bowles opens up this receptacle and manages to recreate the evolution and the changes of the Other's civilization, a civilization that is alien and yet familiar, which is not sealed, but permeated by other peoples and languages.

5. CONCLUSION

For Paul Bowles, traveling was a compulsion, a driving force that impelled him to leave America behind. This hatred from the home soil, where he always had felt alienated, soon appeared in his early poems, that he began composing before turning his attention to fiction. This need to transgress was intimately connected to displacement. In his particular case, travel comes before writing. And travel, considered a challenge to identity, is going to be the source of inspiration for his initial works of fiction and non-fiction. Such interest matches the interest for the primitive in the author's formative years, a concern shared by many writers and artists of the avant-garde.

For Bowles, travel and travel writing were based on the confrontation of the self with alterity, a conflict that unmasks our views on our own culture. It seems a summary of Bowles's literary career, whose writing is rooted in displacement and who chose as a central theme of most of his fiction the conflict of the civilized man when contacting a primitive society and its "natural" man.

This conflict was explored by some of the previous travel writers in Morocco, but Bowles took the conflict to the extreme, exploring the limits of cross-cultural interaction and the feebleness of his own civilization. In this sense, his own displacement and his writings became a tool for criticizing America without writing about America. At the same time, he shared some of the Romantic anxieties of previous travel writers, such as the disappearance of the traditional aspects of Moroccan culture, or the impression that, whatever the changes, Morocco was a place where time had come to a stop. The feeling of

mystery and the fatalism attached to Morocco's inhabitants were other features he shared with the sentimental travel writers.

If traditional travel books triggered the colonial desire and created empire at home, Bowles's writings explored the limits of cosmopolitanism, offering shocking realities to expose the parochialism of his American compatriots. Instead of adhering to a colonialist/imperialist discourse, he maintained himself on the margins, exploring his own subjectivity and exploring ways for the self to interact with alterity.

Through evocative descriptions of the Sahara, Bowles managed to subvert the codes of appropriation of the landscape, the subject of observation; in his fiction, the landscape is responsible for changing the observer. In this immersion in the alien landscape, a "synthetic cosmos," the realization that the sky is not longer sheltering us from nothing is overwhelming, and paves the ground for another central theme in Bowles' writings: the dissolution of the self, the self's undoing. The author opens up an existentialist void and fills it with images of death and violence that provoked fear and disgust in his American readership, reminding them of their own narrow-mindedness and naivety. If the Orient was for Said a commodity that armchair readers could enjoy at home, Bowles' uncomfortable Orient strikes back as a source of horror, the dark side of the sublime in Nature.

In a first stage, Bowles found in Morocco the pre-industrial Golden Age, a lost childhood where imagination ranged free. His interest in preserving the last vestiges of a primitive way of life makes him an inheritor of Orientalist sentimentalism. But, as years went by and he became a permanent expatriate, he applied himself to explore the culture in depth, and he participated in cross-cultural, hybrid projects such as the collaborations with Moroccan authors.

When he turned his literary interest to Morocco's cultural expressions and traditions, Bowles was not trying to create a discursive framework to encapsulate the Other within, as traditional ethnography might had done: he was rather exploring the possibilities of myth and the relation between unconscious and mystic participation. He also partook of some of the objectives of anthropology, devoting many of his short stories and his novel *The Spider's House* to examine the distance between the Same and the Other. Besides, he explored, not without certain nostalgia, the same anthropologic subjects that professional anthropologists researched in Morocco: saints, religious brotherhoods, magic, witchcraft, genii and *baraka*. In this anthropological stage, he changed the main characters in many of his short stories, telling them from the point of view of the Other, frequently including only native characters, who also underwent processes of identity crisis and dissolution. It was his way of translating Moroccan culture, his own interpretation of the primitive mentality, a form of creating new modes of signification taking as a model the "primitive mind," while at the same time denouncing the orthodoxy of nationalism and its campaign for eradicating heterodox cultural and religious manifestations. He did not restrict himself to criticizing the dangers of deculturation that colonizers and Moroccan nationalists brought. His answer was not passive, as he embarked himself in the study of Moroccan culture, recording traditional music, cataloguing rituals and using them as material for his fiction.

Bowles's fascination with otherness is not an empty celebration of exoticism and diversity. There is an identification with the Other through culture. The author believed he shared with Moroccans a similar sense of creativity, which their fantasies responded to his own. After all, if we take Todorov's view, exoticism is not so much the description of a reality as an ideal of what the observer has in mind. An example is the interest for transcending the normal state of consciousness and approaching the unconscious, whether by drug use or by trance experiences. But he also saw kindred spirits in some Moroccans,

those who had similar ways of interpreting reality. And thus, the identification between the "othered" Westerner and the liminal Other is based on imagination.

Bowles was not attracted to Morocco's high culture: he was interested in popular beliefs and marginal characters. He gave a voice to the poor authors and storytellers who did not speak the language of literature, but the Moroccan dialect. Being an "othered" Other in his own culture on account of his sexuality and his communist inclinations, Bowles felt a kinship with liminal subjects with whom he shared imaginative grounds, exploring the cracks on the façade of colonial discourse.

We see clearly two different sensitivities or aesthetic approaches in Bowles' career: a traveler's stage, concerned with external descriptions and territory, and an anthropological stage, more concerned with traditions and with the encounter with the Other. But these were complemented by a cosmopolitan attitude that Bowles maintained throughout his life, a product of travel and expatriation, a self-imposed exile from the coercive atmosphere of America.

His rejection of American values would be shared by the Beat writers, mainly Ginsberg and Burroughs, who also found in Morocco a source of inspiration for his fiction. As years went by, Bowles adopted an ethics of expatriation, offering rupture and discontinuity, in the Foucaultian sense,[178] of the discourse on Morocco. He altered the perceptions of the Others and their culture, suspending the accumulated knowledge on Morocco, cutting it from its original imperialist motivations and colonial complicities. Bowles never tried to hide the subjectivity of his own narratives, a feature that he prized in travel books, as they placed the emphasis upon the imagination.

[178] See *The Archaeology of Knowledge* 4, 9, 21-22, 28.

Thanks to his cosmopolitan condition, Bowles could approach new subjectivities and realities. His literary self came into being through movement and displacement, bringing him closer to the space-in-between occupied by the cosmopolitan self. Even if he took advantage of his privileged position as a foreign expatriate when he was living in the International Tangier, he contributed to redefine the city as a site of cultural creation, a world literary space, a vantage point used to contravene the domestic status quo. With his translations, sites of confrontation and collaboration and examples of cultural hybridization at the same time, he was able to reformulate and renew the colonial past, taking down the binary structures of dominance through an exercise of critical cosmopolitanism, publishing in America hybrid texts that belonged to another culture. As the possible starter of *al-adab at-Tanji*, he opened Tangier as a multilingual literary space for the national and transnational authors to come. At the same time, perhaps unwillingly, he also collaborated in the mythologization of the place, promoting cosmopolitan longing and an inspiration to voyage for new readers.

Bowles found his place within Moroccan tradition in the cosmopolitan non-place that is translation, an act of cultural reciprocity and his contribution to the Third Space. With *Points in Time*, he was opening up new "relations of spacing and temporality," in Bhabha's words, relocating and reinterpreting Morocco in the literary imagination, through an exercise of extra-temporal cosmopolitanism. In this multiformat reportage, the mature Bowles embarks on a journey across time here all his interests regarding Morocco converge. Bowles subverts the Orientalist travel writing tradition offering a fragmentary account, a fracture of the totalitarian discourse of the grand narratives. By including himself in the narration, he becomes the hidden, liminal spokesman and becomes one with his own interpretation of Moroccan culture. In his last imaginary travel, the displaced,

cosmopolitan self finds a way to dissolve into the history of a place he had come to know so intimately.

6. APPENDIX: ORIENTALIST ANGLO-AMERICAN TRADITION IN MOROCCO (1810-1932)

6.1. Orientalist confidence (1810-1891)

John Buffa, *Travels through the Empire of Morocco*. London: J. J. Stockdale, 1810

John Buffa (d. 1812) opens the nineteenth century with a curious narrative. The author is not exactly a traveler, but a doctor who was sent to the garrison in Gibraltar as a medical officer whose task was to investigate the boats under quarantine. Eventually he was sent to "Barbary" to assist the governor in Larache, afterwards he took a route to the South and met the Emperor in Fez, who caused a great impression on him. Therefore, while writing his *Travels* his main intention was to show: "the good policy, on the part of this country [Great Britain], of keeping upon terms of strict amity with the government of Morocco" (ix). From the very beginning, the intention of the author is to prove that a good relationship between the two states is possible. Buffa is quite diplomatic in doing so; after an incident in which a British officer had been beaten, he explains: "Such an act will naturally inspire you with horror, and induce you to consider the Moors as a ferocious, barbarous set of people: but, believe me […] At any other port of Barbary, a British officer will meet with a most kind and hospitable reception, and every mark of respect due to him" (62).

The narrative is quite conventional regarding the choice of topics—local history, portrayal of cities and landscape, ethnographical descriptions—but it is nevertheless out of the ordinary how these topics are presented: they are almost devoid of any allusions to the picturesque aspect so frequent in the travelling accounts dating back from the Romantic period. The narrative is plain, nearly unsentimental; the description of the cities lacks any

romantic ingredients and there are no personal comments on the historical facts. Nevertheless, the distance between the 'I' and the 'Other' is emphasized by Orientalist stereotypes and binary oppositions; for example, Europe stands for Enlightenment, whereas Morocco represents ignorance; Buffa is mystified by this fact: "It appeared to me next to impossible that a nation so contiguous to Europe, with which it has for centuries maintained a constant intercourse, could have remained in a state of such profound ignorance" (17). According to the author, there is a marked contrast between peasants and town dwellers, as they do not seem "the same race of men," the first ones are "simple," "hospitable," characters taken from a scene from the *Arcadia*, while the later are vile, corrupted and superstitious (13). Another binary opposition draws from the difference between the higher classes—elegant, charming and noble—and the lower strata—double, cunning and highly "susceptibly of fanaticism". In general terms, Buffa explains that the Moors used to be a great and brave empire in the past but their "indolence" prevents them from evolving. In the Chapter VIII he explains: "To an Englishman, their mode of life would scarcely appear worthy to be called living, but merely vegetating" (75). This way of "vegetating" in a kind of limbo, an indeterminate state which is neither life nor death is an idea also present in later travelling accounts and a concept based on the imperialist tradition; the Africans do not have lifeways at all, and are subsequently portrayed as "cultureless beings," according to Mary Louise Pratt (*Imperial Eyes* 53). It is also interesting to notice how Buffa deplores that, even if Morocco is (geographically) "contiguous to Europe," at the same time it is (culturally) so "ignorant," that is overwhelmingly different from Europe. In Said's opinion, it is evident that "the geographic boundaries accompany the social, ethnic, and cultural ones in expected ways" (*Orientalism* 54). Boundaries help to establish the radical distinction between 'same' and 'other.' What really astonishes Buffa is that "they" have remained "ignorant" even under continuous

contact with "us;" that is, he implies that they have *chosen* to remain so. In later accounts, this fact will turn into something positive for the traveler, whereas "ignorance" will be perceived as "novelty," and exoticism will acquire an intrinsic value.

In most of travel narratives, the ethnographical description goes alongside the portrait of landscapes. Following Mary Louise Pratt, the imperial narratives create a "panoramic scope" as "the travelers are chiefly present as a kind of collective moving eye on which the sights/sites register" (*Imperial Eyes* 59). Thus, the country presents itself to the invisible European seer, whose "impersonal eye" commands "what falls within its gaze; mountains and valleys 'show themselves,' 'present a picture'… The European presence is absolutely uncontested… Unheroic, unparticularized, egoless, the eye seems able to do little but gaze from periphery of its own creation" (*Imperial Eyes* 60). John Buffa is no exception to the rule, although his *Travels* are not an imperial narrative. In Chapter VII, Buffa produces one of these panoramic descriptions: "As the ship drew near the shore, I had a full view of this wild coast. The tops of the lofty mountains are prodigious barren rocks, while their base is interspersed with broom and box. The hills and dales are covered with myrtles of various kinds, assuming different shades of lovely green. The towers and castles, which are of a delicate whiteness, rising in the midst of these groves of myrtles, render the scene interesting. The plaster made use of in the erection of these towers is, of itself, extremely white; but the Moors are not satisfied with this, and they add a whitewash of lime" (65).

This perspective is impossible: like in a Flemish painting, the smaller details coexist with the elements on the front. Within this all-inclusive perspective, the eye of the Westerner is omnipotent; it encompasses everything regardless of the size and position of the seer. In another chapter, the country presents luxuriant objects for the enjoyment of our

traveler and the picturesque finally appears: the landscape "continually presents the most interesting objects. A scattered ruin, a large village, a meandering river, or a fine natural cascade, vineyards, woods, corn-fields, meadows, and saints' houses, surrounded by beautiful gardens and shrubberies, all lying in endless variety, formed the most picturesque landscapes" (100). In addition, the valleys are compared to the greens of Arcadia: "At one instant the eye is presented with fine corn-fields, meadows, and high hills; nay, mountains, cultivated to the very summits, are covered with immense flocks of sheep, and herds of cattle; while the valleys conveyed to the imagination an idea of the fertile plains of Arcadia; the simple manners of the Moors, who tend these flocks and herds, still further inducing one to believe them the happy, peaceful people, the poets feign the Arcadian swains to have been" (30). For Buffa, the Moors live on an earthly paradise where they lead a pre-industrial, pastoral idyll with nature.

As a doctor, Buffa had the unique opportunity to visit the Sultan's seraglio where he was conducted to examine the "favourite Sultana" who was "indisposed" (137). Many other travelers would have been more than satisfied with such a visit: the harem is a perpetual fantasy throughout Orientalist tradition, and if they are not able to see it personally, usually they make it up or they quote somebody else's account. Buffa describes it as a marble maze, in which the different rooms differed "only in splendour and magnificence." In general, the seraglio is absolutely amusing, but "nothing is wanting to render this a complete terrestrial paradise, but liberty, the deprivation of which must embitter every enjoyment" (113).[179]

[179] For a personal approach to the Moroccan harem, see Fatema Mernissi, *Scheherazade Goes West: Different Cultures, Different Harems*. New York: Washington Square Press, 2001. For a good deconstruction of the Orientalist harem, see Ruth Bernard Yeazell, *Harems of the Mind*. New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2000.

In general terms, Buffa's *Travels* are a good example of confident Orientalism, emphasizing the distance between "same" and "other," categorizing behaviors, customs, and ways of thinking to dismiss them straightaway. We will see how in the subsequent travelling accounts the differences are not as stark but somehow enjoyed.

David Urquhart. *The Pillars of Hercules; or a Narrative of Travels in Spain and Morocco in 1848* (2 vols.) London: Richard Bentley, 1850.

The second author in this catalogue is a controversial character. Urquhart (1805-1877) was a British diplomat who served in Turkey most of his career; he campaigned against the Russian interference in Turkey, and later, already as an MP, positioned himself against the British intervention in the Crimean War. He was also the responsible for introducing the Turkish baths in England. Urquhart sympathized with the Orient, and although he had not been to Morocco before writing *The Pillars of Hercules*, he already had a great deal of Oriental knowledge that he was going to apply to his experience in Morocco.

The author did not visit Morocco "on any settled plan," but when passing through the Straits of Gibraltar he was "so fascinated by the beauty and mystery of the adjoining lands" (iii) that he decided to stay and to record his visit. From now on, Urquhart is going to develop a mystique of discovery: "Barbary" is attractive not only because it is "unknown" and "original" but also because its "association with […] *Canaan*" which has a "claim on our affections" (iii). On the one hand, to associate the Bible or the biblical *topos* with the Orient is a convention of the Orientalist discourse.[180] On the other, with such a discourse Urquhart positions himself as the responsible for presenting the world with "treasures unknown" (iv). This is a common device in the narratives of exploration; something is discovered only when the Westerner sees it, before it was "unknown."

[180] Said claims that the Bible is an "Orientalist province." See *Orientalism*, 4, 63, 65, 76-77.

Besides, Urquhart also believes that this "unknown" takes the form of magic in the daily life of Moroccans: in short, Morocco is a land of wonders. He writes: "they still preserve the incantations and divinations of the earliest times; they have perfumes and incense, secrets and mysteries, yet in use in every house" (*The Pillars of Hercules* 287). These kinds of statements recall the first impressions the Moroccan lands caused on young Paul Bowles. Approaching the coast, he was "much excited" by some uncanny feeling; he had based his "sense of being in the world partly on an unreasoned conviction that certain areas of the earth's surface contained more magic than others" (*Without Stopping* 125). Moreover, Bowles not only conceived Morocco as a place which would disclose its secrets for him, but also as a place where magic was a preislamic characteristic inherent in North African culture.

Urquhart also points out the "peculiarities" of Morocco, stressing its originality and independence from other countries, even Muslim. Thus, the idea of an all-encompassing Orient is absent from this particular text, but the author remains the discoverer of "treasures unknown" from the introduction, even if the subject is relatively superfluous: they have rooms with a distinct shape, different decorations and furniture, "all unlike what is to be seen east or west, north or south." They have carpets "in their own style," and caps, but "the form is their own," and towels, but "they are unlike us" (*The Pillars of Hercules* 285).

In Buffa's text, the (cultural) distance was considered "ignorance," while Urquhart sees such a distance with admiration. He explains: "they are people of thirty centuries, before whom we, with our institutions and our ideas, are as insects of yesterday" (*The Pillars of Hercules* 288). Therefore, the Moroccans are the archaeological evidence of a glorious past, and what is more, they are walking history: "Elsewhere, the records of antiquity are to be sought in characters traced on marble or on brass; but here they are to be

found in the living man;—not the traces of their antiquity as that of the Chinese, because *they* have not changed, but of ours. Coming from a common source, flowing from a common fountain, the streams of our waters have been mingled and overcharged, and here we see what with us was in the beginning –the key to the legends of Mythology the original of the pictures of Homer, the source of the metaphors of the prophets, the people of the old covenant reserved to our day. And the source of the religious practices accompanied by which Christianity appeared and settled itself in Europe" (*The Pillars of Hercules* 288). The Moors have remained unchanged, and so they are a living "record of antiquity." But it is not their own "antiquity," it is one we all Westerners and Orientals have in common, it is a shared history. According to the author, such "antiquity" is biblical and classical, the source is both Semitic and Greek; Moroccans have remained pure as clear water, but our water is "mingled and overcharged." If in Buffa's account we confronted "cultureless beings" whose lifeways could seldom be considered lifeways at all, Urquhart puts forward the opposite model, they have lifeways, but they are ancient, examples of what Westerners used to be in the past. But the fact is that, while the Westerners had evolved, they had remained the same, they were stuck in a timeless impasse.

It is not the first time we are going to face this idea; more than a century later, Bowles declared in an interview with Jeffrey Bailey that when he first got to Morocco he thought "this is the way people used to be, the way my own ancestors were thousands of years ago. The Natural Man. Basic Humanity… they haven't evolved the same way, so far, as we have" (*Conversations with Paul Bowles* 130). The same notion is found in the preface to *The Spider's House*, in which the writer argues Fez was a "mediaeval city functioning in the twentieth century" (ix). The "natural man" is the common ancestor to humanity as a whole, while Urquhart's Oriental is the predecessor of the Christian Westerner, but the dictum is the same: Moroccans do not evolve, they do not change, the

civilization is in a childish stage compared to other places; it was not better or worse than Western civilization, according to Bowles, "there really is no comparison possible" (*Conversations* 45-46).

Murray, Elizabeth. *Sixteen Years in Morocco, Spain, and the Canary Islands* (2 vols.) London: Hurst and Blackett, 1859.

The reason why Elizabeth Murray (1815-1882) spent such a long time abroad was due to her position as a wife of a consul, although she does not mention this fact in her narrative. She spent nine years in Morocco, so hers is the opinion of a resident; reading her account, one thinks her stay was short, due to the superfluous remarks. She restricts the narrative to the city of Tangier, but her stay proved enough to display a great knowledge of the people, customs, and history. Like Urquhart, she emphasizes the originality of Morocco, and like Bowles and the later, such a revelation takes place before the landing of her boat: "the Silent City, Protected of the Lord, is so short that one is hardly prepared for a scene so new in all its aspects. A new world is literally disclosed to the traveller, and as the strange pictures of life which is as yet so foreign to all his sympathies pass before him, new and vivid sensations are awakened, and the circle of his experience is greatly enlarged" (vol. 1. 9). The rhetoric of discovery is overwhelming: this is a "new world disclosed" to the avid eyes of the traveler/discoverer; all the sensations "awakened" in such a moment will eventually widen the "experience" of the Westerner, they will feed the need for newness. The place is a "scene," a picture "disclosed" so the act of discovery is carried out just by the passive action of observation.

Murray is also aware of the Orientalist conventions; she is soon ready to draw comparisons between Morocco and the Bible, and also between Morocco and the other

towering reference of Orientalism, the *Arabian Nights*. Both examples are held to underline the primitive facet of the civilization: "The primitive aspect of everything around me took me quite by surprise, and I recalled successively scenes from the *Arabian Nights* and from the Bible. Indeed, it seemed to me that I had gone back two thousand years, that I was in a country where civilization had stagnated for ages past, where commercial intercourse had left no stamp on the features of society, and where no innovations from Europe had yet crossed the Straits of Gibraltar to supersede those old manners and customs by which life in eastern countries is so strongly contrasted with that of more western lands" (*Sixteen Years in Morocco, Spain, and the Canary Islands* 11). Unlike Urquhart and in the manner of Buffa, she does not have a positive approach; the civilization is "stagnated." Besides, she is also convinced that Morocco is part of a vast Orient in which customs and manners are shared, in strong opposition to Western life. Thus, the Orient is a whole but admits endless subdivisions; some parts are more known or knowable but it is possible to make a reductionist exercise and declare that "old manners and customs" are shared. Thirdly, the very act of going to Morocco becomes a journey back on time. This is a feature present in the most diverse authors: Meakin, Urquhart, Bowles, Burroughs, Wharton, et al. It will be discussed in detail in the next pages of the Appendix.

As the account develops, Murray's opinions become contradictory: what was original and new upon arrival turns into a real dullness and a permanent disillusion, everything that seemed beautiful and interesting at the beginning—the interior of the houses, the female outfit, the performances of musicians— had "lost all their power of entrancement" (105). She knowingly reflects upon the power of the representations of the country: "However pleasing and striking it may be to read in books of the splendours of Moorish costume, of the flash of the Moorish sabre, or of the varieties of Moorish life, the reality generally turns out to very different from our preconceptions […] We have now […]

been so long fixed in this silent city that we began almost to consider it as a prison" (*Sixteen Years in Morocco, Spain, and the Canary Islands* 105). There are two points at issue: she recognizes that the "splendours" that remained interesting after her stay could be learnt from a book. Those splendors are precisely the colorful elements which permeate the translations of the *Arabian Nights*. According to Said, the language of Orientalism is a "means of *creation*" (*Orientalism* 87) but at the same time, it configures a literary chain; both authors and readers are part of the Orientalist all-encompassing system, and their ideas derive from previous readings. If the Orient can be recorded and studied it is not absolutely necessary to go to the Orient to know it. Said's statement is conclusive: "The discourse of Orientalism, its internal consistency and rigorous procedures, were all designed for readers and consumers in the metropolitan West" (*Orientalism* 336). Towards the end of her stay, Murray seems to prefer the commodities of an Orientalist reading over the real intercourse with an Eastern culture. The "discoveries" she had made cannot be compared to the "splendours" of her "preconceptions." In short, she condenses a whole country in a simple sentence: Morocco is "an uncivilised country […] where the people are ignorant and prejudiced" (*Sixteen Years in Morocco, Spain, and the Canary Islands* 102). She does not give examples of any "prejudiced Moors," but she does act moved by Orientalist bigotry. Her portrait of the Moroccan women does not differ from any of the typical masculine reports: "Here sits Fatima or Leila […] It was really something new to find myself engaged in striking a bargain with a young lady enjoying on of these romantic names, usually associated with the enticing fictions of the Arabian Nights or the high-wrought poetry of Byron" (67). Once again, the stress is placed upon the fact that reality reflects Orientalist accounts. Women are nothing else than "romantic" characters from the *Arabian Nights* that display their secret beauty to the Westerner. They do not have the right to a single personality as they can be either Fatima or Leila. In another chapter, Mrs. Murray devotes

all her attention to describe the customs and daily life of local women: how they dress, how is their toilet, the "size and measure of female loveliness"— but she does not reproduce a single sentence of some possible conversation. Human interaction is absent; the other is silent and subject to a passive yet scrutinizing Western eye.

The text presents an ideal example of confident Orientalism, with its contradictions and generalizations, but there is an important point that should not pass unnoticed: more than a traveler, Murray is an expatriate. Somehow she hides the truth: she passed nine years in a foreign country but there is not a single allusion to the passing of time in the whole book. On the contrary, she tries to maintain the narrative vivid, to forge the illusion of novelty: she constantly refers to the "impressions" the human melting pot caused on her (16), to how "struck" she was "by the contrast" between the interior and the exterior aspect of the houses (59), to how things were not as she had "imagined" (15). Any valuable comments derived from her prolonged stay, any references to intercultural exchange, any reflections on the role of the foreigners in Morocco, any travels to the interior—Murray does not explore any of these possibilities, but she chooses to write the stereotypical account of her age.

Richardson, James. *Travels in Morocco*. 2 vols. London: Charles J. Skeet, 1860.

James Richardson (d.1858?) died in central Africa where he was dealing with some local chiefs on account of the Royal Geographical Society; it was his widow, J. E. Richardson, who took the responsibility for editing his *Travels*. The death of the author romanticizes the text, and anticipates the mysterious deaths of explorers like John Speke (1864) and the search of Sir Henry Stanley looking for the missing Doctor Livingstone

(1869-1871). Richardson received funding from the Anti-Slavery Society to explore Morocco and visit the Sultan; he was supposed to persuade him to follow the example of Britain, which had abolished slavery in 1833. As a whole, the book is a geopolitical atlas of the country, including a great deal of information on forms of government; diplomatic relations between the Emperor and the European powers; slavery; corn monopolies and other agricultural interests; how are the 'functionaries;' payroll of soldiers and functionaries; influence of the French consuls; interviews with numerous governors; Moroccan dynasties; historical review of the population; geographical borders; description of the cities of the interior; division of the Kingdom into states and zones; natural products; nature of the soil; situation of the Moroccan Jews, etc.

The introduction is made by a naval officer, L. Trent Cave, and it is openly imperialistic, paving the way for a military "well-deserved" intervention. The Moroccan panorama is presented as follows: the land is rich, the weather is warm, the Jewish population suffers from prosecution, and Arabs and Berbers could be good soldiers if they were properly trained. According to this officer, the population is "rarely to be depended on by the Emperor, but so powerful an incentive is religious fanaticism that, were he raise the standard of the Holy War, a large Army would quickly rally around him" (v). James Richardson does not manifestly support a potential intervention in the country, but in his *Travels* the paternalistic overtones abound: he refers dearly to "My good friends, the Moors," but he deplores the corruption of the "covetous governors," the ones to blame for the situation of the population: "The inhabitants of towns and of the country live in rags in miserable hovels. What raiment! what food! mortality is dreadful, the children are invalids, and the women, especially in the country, are condemned to do the work of beasts of burden; such is the picture of society" (29). Besides, the text provides information about the strategic possibilities of several of the cities. This information appears together with

allusions to the picturesque aspect, as in the case of Tangier: "The modern Tangier is a small city of the province of Hasbat, picturesquely placed on the eastern slope of a hill, which terminates in the west with its port and bay, having some analogy to the site of Algiers. It has almost a square form, and its ramparts are a wall, flanked here and there with towers" (21). Richardson states that the military "strength of Morocco lies in her internal cities, her inland population, and the natural difficulties of the territory" (3).

Since the very beginning of his *Travels*, the author reflects upon the isolation of Morocco, a country banned for foreigners, with the exception of the coastal towns: "Morocco is the China of North Africa. The grand political maxim of the Shreefian Court is, the exclusion of strangers; to look upon all strangers with disgust and suspicion" (1). This attitude specifically directed towards the travelers, as the author later explains. To explore the interior, one must count on the permission of the Sultan; consent is available if you can pay for it. In addition to the geopolitical interest, the narrative has many things in common with more "innocent" examples of travel books. Some pages are dedicated to customs and other usual subjects of the travel narrative: beauty of women, religion, "superstition regarding salt," description of a Moorish village, view of the Sahara, snake charmers, local saints, etc.

Compared to the different narratives which have been analyzed so far, this is the first book that manifestly includes the native interlocutor in the discourse. Richardson is able to exchange impressions with different elements of the Moroccan population by means of his knowledge of Arabic. It is frequent to find translated Moroccan vocabulary and there are references to his way of speaking. Especially relevant is the episode with the *talib* (student): "I received a visit from a Moorish taleb, to whom I read some portions of my journal, as also the Arabic Testament:

> Taleb: 'The English read Arabic because they are the friends of Mussulmans. For this reason, God gives them wit to understand the language of the Koran.'
> Traveller: 'We wish to study all languages, and to know all people.'
> Taleb: 'Now, as you have become so wise in our country, and read Arabic, where next are you going? Why not be quiet and return home, and live a marabout? Where next are you going?'"
>
> (*Travels in Morocco* 26-27)

This kind of dialogue tends to be repeated throughout the narrative; almost always, the interlocutor is depersonalized, a "taleb," an "officer," a "merchant," or even "the Moors" as a group who answers to the questions with a single voice. The author is aware of the good impression that his knowledge causes on the Moors; when he encounters some Moroccan pilgrims in their way to Cordoba: they were "greatly pleased to hear the sound of their own mother-tongue" (15). It seems conspicuous how the traveler declares that the English "wish to study all languages, and to know all people" (15). Philology is the key to knowledge in modern Orientalism as it "enables a general view of human life and of the system of things" (*Orientalism* 132). The study of language allows the Westerner to catalogue the human life and to "know" peoples, or rather, to subject those people to the strict hierarchies of the Orientalist discourse. And the English wish to study and know "all," to exert different kinds of power over the non-western world.

Once the author starts his itinerary inland, he produces some fundamental descriptions of the Sahara, absent from the previous travelling accounts. Richardson writes: "On our return from Toser, we had an extensive view of the Sahara, an ocean as far as the eye could see, of what one would have taken his oath was water, the shores, inlets, and bays being clearly defined, but, in reality, nothing but salt scattered on the surface. Several islets were apparently breaking its watery expanse but there also were only heaps of sand raised from the surrounding flat. The whole country, hills, plains, and deserts, gave us an

idea as if the materials had been thrown together for manufacture and had never been completed. Nevertheless, these savage deserts of boundless extent are as complete in their kind as the smiling meadows and fertile corn-fields of England, each being perfect it itself, necessary to the grand whole of creation, and forming an essential portion of the works of Divine Providence" (*Travels in Morocco* 284-285). This extract anticipates the descriptions in Richard Burton's *Lake Regions of Central Africa* (1860) analyzed by Mary Louise Pratt in *Imperial Eyes*. This is what she calls "the-master-of-all-I-survey scene;" these scenes are usually promontory descriptions characterized by a heroic perspective, by a certain aestheticization and an evident density of meaning. All these tools help to recreate a relationship of mastery between the seer and the seen: the desert is "savage" to the eyes of the explorer, who pronounces it to be as "complete" –meaning as "perfect"— as the fertile England. Only in a relationship of domination a writer could feel compelled to justify the beauty or perfection of a natural environment, and by doing so, he was rendering it as familiar as the English countryside. The magnificent works of the "Divine Providence" strongly contrast with the lifelessness of Moroccans, the "dreary monotony of Moorish life."

Richardson's *Travels* open a new tendency in the field of Moroccan travel writing. The author embodies the kind of expert that the Empire needed to expand its knowledge of the world: a philologist familiar with Islam, half explorer and half diplomat, a priceless agent to know the situation in Morocco at the moment in which France were intervening in the adjoining Algeria and in which the Moroccans obviously shared more sympathies with the British than with the French. Richardson justifies any future intervention by deploring the corruption of a despotic system of government and by praising the virtues of his "old friends, the Moors" (16-17). Although England did not make any advancement towards the occupation of Morocco, renouncing to it by the Act of Algeciras, these accounts offered a

necessary dose of information in the age in which information was knowledge, and knowledge meant power.

Twain, Mark. *The Innocents Abroad or The New Pilgrims Progress*. London: Penguin Books, 1966 [1869].

The figure of Samuel Clemens (1835-1910) seems out of place in this report. He was an American and a professional writer, a different representative of the nineteenth century, in which transatlantic travel was becoming easier, quicker, safer, and above everything else, cheaper and more popular. It is the moment in which the organized tours started to appear. In addition, Europe was popularized in the United States by travel literature. Twain was a major example of an already known phenomenon: cultural tourism was at its height.

From the very beginning, Twain states his condition of tourist. The writer travels together with other compatriots and he soon declares his detachment from and even his disregard for any kind of high culture product, or any narrative of exploration: "This book is a record of a pleasure-trip. If it were a record of a solemn scientific expedition, it would have about it that gravity, that profundity, and that impressive incomprehensibility which are so proper to works of that kind, and withal so attractive. Yet notwithstanding it is only a record of a pic-nic, it has a purpose, which is, to suggest the reader how *he* should see Europe and the East if he looked at them with his own eyes instead of the eyes if those who travelled in those countries before him […] I offer no apologies for any departures from the usual style of travel-writing that may be charged against me—for I think I have seen with impartial eyes, and I am sure I have written at least honestly, whether wisely or not" (viii).

Although Twain writes only three short chapters about Morocco —he spent a couple of days in Tangier—his account is so relevant to the genre of travel writing in general that it deserves a study at length. His purpose was double edged: he wanted his reader to look at Europe and the East with "his own eyes," but of course Twain wanted him to look through the author's very own eyes. His eyes are American and untrained. They are supposedly "impartial," but this is another convention of the genre, a supposed objectivity to which most of the writers alluded. At fist sight one may think that Twain is opposing himself to the Orientalist trend, but he rather wanted to establish an American tradition of travel writing that would eventually differentiate itself from the "gravity, profundity" and "incomprehensibility" of the European one. Twain is familiar with the conventions of the genre to be able to depart from them. After all, a good satire has to be familiar with the original. His text is therefore built on a personal idiosyncrasy, but it nevertheless shares the general characteristics of the Orientalist discourse that are, if anything, exacerbated.

The author reached the Straits on board of the *Quaker City*. Like in the accounts of Murray and Urquhart, there is an allusion to the Bible: "the tall yellow-splotched hills of Africa on our right, with their bases veiled in a blue haze and their summits swathed in clouds—the same being according to the Scripture, which says that 'clouds and darkness are over the land.' The words were spoken of this particular portion of Africa, I believe" (63). Perhaps there is certain implicit irony in the aestheticization of the passage. This is confirmed by the fact that there is no further information on the coast, but one page is dedicated to the description and praise of the "beautiful stranger," an American gunboat: "She came speeding over the sea like a great bird. Africa and Spain were forgotten […] how tame a sight his country's flag is at home compared to what it is in a foreign land. To see it is to see a vision of home itself and all its idols, and feel a thrill that would stir a very river of sluggish blood!" (64). A blatant patriotism becomes evident: America is

everywhere and the sight of its flag stirs every nerve on the American citizen. Besides, there is an implicit praise for technology and for military prowess, the best of all American attributes. At the same time, it is a critique of American provincialism. Malcom Bradbury in *Dangerous Pilgrimages* states that *The Innocents Abroad* became a milestone in American literature because it established Twain's reputation as a comic modern realist and "true western American original" (158), recording for the first time the "transatlantic phenomenon," and changing the "national attitude to the world abroad" (158). His is an "innocent" view of Europe and the East that strongly contrasts with the high and solemn European accounts, whose sole purpose was to deconstruct the European myth in America. Therefore, the book had all the ingredients to become a "reversed guide book" (*Dangerous Pilgrimages* 167). Twain took material from other guide books but he also made up part of the contents, making fun of the antiquities, manners, and sites from Old Europe, or important places for the European imaginary, like the Near East and Tangier, to which chapters VIII and IX are entirely devoted.

Twain ratifies Tangier's novelty, like Murray and Urquhart before him. His remarks seem too emphatic to be devoid of ironic intentions. Twain explains at the beginning of the chapter that Tangier is "royal" because it is absolutely "foreign," and he and his fellows have been looking for total "novelty:" "Tangier is the spot we have been longing for all the time. Elsewhere we have found foreign-looking things and foreign-looking people, but always with things and people intermixed that we were familiar with before […] We wanted something thoroughly and uncompromisingly foreign—foreign from top to bottom—foreign from center to circumference—foreign inside and outside and all around—nothing any where about it to dilute its foreignness—nothing to remind us of any other people or any other land under the sun" (*The Innocents Abroad* 76). It is difficult to elucidate Twain's level of irony; as a good comedian, it is hard to know if he is ever

serious, for instance, in the statement that follows: “Tangier is foreign land if ever there was one; and the true spirit of it can never be found in any book save the Arabian Nights” (76). We can see that the alluded foreignness is overemphasized, but at the same time the *Arabian Nights* are such a commonplace in the Orientalist discourse that it is unclear whether its inclusion on the text responds to a satiric objective or not.

Intentionally or not, Twain is attacking the flanks of the Orientalist discourse, because he makes use of its devices to build up a satire, or, at least, he is able to makes his readership aware of the fact that Orientalism is a series of endless stereotypes about the Orient and its people. Edward Said explains that within the mechanics of Orientalism, something “patently foreign and distant acquires, for one reason or another, a status more rather than less familiar” by means of which the novelty and suggestiveness of the Orient “are brought under control” (*Orientalism* 58-59). In Twain’s case, the ‘familiarity’ of the foreign is obtained with the help of a convention of the travel books: Twain abounds in the “foreign” aspect by underlining that Tangier do not relate to anything previously seen “save in pictures,” and even so, “the pictures used to seem exaggerations—they seemed too weird and fanciful for reality” (76). In a similar way, he notices that the “doors are arched with the peculiar arch we see in Moorish pictures” (77). And “Isn’t it an oriental picture?” (*The Innocents Abroad* 77), Twain rhetorically asks after describing the streets. That is, in his imaginary, the Orient exists prior to his visit. The eye that was supposed to be impersonal is once again all-encompassing, is reviewing the same picture that he was watching at home. Tangier becomes a picture inside another picture. In the same page of the last quotation, an illustration entitled “View of a Street in Tangier” visually represents such oriental picture: a threatening soldier, some picturesque characters, different races, colorful outfits—none of the figures is doing anything; they are just posing for the spectator, reproducing the same portraits the readership used to observe at home. For Edward Said,

Mark Twain was just performing an exercise of "personal Orientalism" strongly differentiated from the "authoritative reports" of scholarly travelers (*Orientalism* 192). In my personal opinion, Twain's cynicism helps to challenge the hegemonic positioning of such travelers; he was forcing the genre to confront itself with its inherent inconsistencies. The fact is that he was criticizing a tradition but he was not departing absolutely from it, leaving aside the 'scholarly' side while at the same time maintaining its theatricality.

After due references to the genre, he puts forward his "innocent" reflection upon the place: "What a funny old town it is! It seems like profanation to laugh, and jest and bandy the frivolous chat of our day amid its hoary relics. Only the stately phraseology and the measured speech of the sons of the Prophet are suited to a venerable antiquity like this. Here is a crumbling wall that was old when Columbus discovered America […] was old when Charlemagne and his paladins beleaguered enchanted castles and battled with giants and genii in the fabled days of the olden time" (*The Innocents Abroad* 78). Twain is opposing the antiquity of Morocco to the newness of America, but such an antiquity is somehow "funny" and can be only verified by the presence of an unimpressive "crumbling wall." Much more puzzling is the mixture of fantasy and historic events. For the author, history seems useless; Charlemagne lived so long ago that he might have fought giants, and the city is "funny" because its ancient relics are good for nothing. The Moors, with their paraphernalia and complicated speech can have it all for themselves.

Right after such statements, he produces the most fantastic account of the history of the place. In his reversed guide-book the combination of history and myth goes along the plain invention of places and facts. He is an "innocent" tourist "abroad," and his eye is supposedly "impartial;" his literary persona becomes a protective device by which he can say virtually anything: "it was a town, though a queer one, when Hercules, clad in his lion-

skin, landed here, four thousand years ago. In these streets he met Anitus, the king of the country […] The king's country residence was at the famous Garden of Hesperides […] The garden, with its golden apples, is gone now" (*The Innocents Abroad* 79-80).

Mark Twain's account is really modern as it introduces in travel writing the point of view of the tourist and the feeling of touch and go. For the tourist, the place is "full of interest for one day, but after that is a weary prison" (*The Innocents Abroad* 88). Nowadays, the prototype of American tourist has become a stereotype in itself. Twain contributed to create the character of the American tourist, with its provincialism and his utilitarian spirit; one might think that, as an American, Paul Bowles might have followed such trend, as many others did. On the contrary, Bowles tries to impersonate the classic traveler. Port, in *The Sheltering Sky* explained that the difference between being a tourist and a traveler was "one of time." Whereas the tourist spends a short time in a place, the traveler, "belonging no more to one place than to the next, moves slowly" (*The Sheltering Sky* 10).

Leared, Arthur. *Morocco and the Moors: Being an Account of Travels, With a General Description of the Country and Its People*. London: Sampson Low, Marston, Searle, and Rivington. 1876.

Arthur Leared (1822-1879) was a doctor and a member of the Royal Geographic Society, and he identified the site of the Roman settlement Volubilis in Morocco. In his preface, Leared declared his intentions: he would present an "accurate" account based on what he "saw and heard" and on "information" from (foreign) residents (v). Secondly, he expressed an explicit desire to attain "an instructive" goal, and thirdly, to follow the style of the "old travellers," composing a "plain narrative" (vi). In fact, Leared's style is plain and presumably objective, the result being an unsentimental and unadorned text. Obviously, his

objectivity is biased since all his informants are foreign residents and his remarks are not devoid of Orientalist overtones and praise for the British empire. The itinerary followed by Leared is quite long compared to the rest of travelling accounts discussed so far: Tangier, Casablanca, Mazagan, Mogador, "The City of Morocco" or Marrakech, Safi and Azamoor. Besides, there are a certain number of chapters attached that shape a kind of Moroccan encyclopedia, including random subjects like government, healing, agriculture, sport, natural history, climate, trade, or drug use.

Even though the author's intention is to retrace the steps of the "old travellers" he was indeed more apt to be a tourist on certain occasions: for example, on Tangier he hires an unnamed guide, and he includes some advice for the tourists to come: cost of living (21), "picturesque" sights that are worth the interest of an artist (*Morocco and the Moors* 19), and several places of general interest. In the different excursions he made, Leared, like a good English gentleman, was able to practice his favorite sports: hunting and fishing. Long passages are dedicated to explain the peculiarities of hunting in Morocco, along with practical information for future travelers.[181]

The author approached Tangier like the rest of our travelers, by boat, only that his initial emotions are not as positive as they were in previous accounts: "To do Tangier justice it should be viewed only from the sea, to put one's foot within its walls is to dispel an illusion" (*Morocco and the Moors* 2). Disappointment is a crucial feeling for many travel writers; it has its roots in the authors' frustration when reaching their destination and finding it different to what they expected. According to the anthropologist Marc Augé, modern tourists suffer from frustration when the realities they encounter do not resemble

[181] See *Morocco and the Moors* 42-51, 66.

the images they had previously seen of the place they are going to visit.[182] In Leared's case, disillusionment appears when he decides the place is not exotic and magnificent enough to his own standards, a feeling increased after landing in Casablanca: "the disappointment […] was greater still […] inside the walls it is the dirtiest, most tumble-down place ever seen" (56). As a matter of fact, Leared is utterly disappointed to witness how the purported "primitivism" is being replaced by a certain hybridism: "we see the influence of European ideas and customs in combination with those more primitive of the Moor" (*Morocco and the Moors* 73).

There is an inner contradiction related to such an idea: whereas the author deplores the hybrid quality of Morocco—specifically Tangier—he also assumes that the country is backward due to its lack of technical advances (roads, modern hospitals, trains…), which the Moroccans regard with blatant "dislike" (78) and even "disdain" (223). While primitivism is seen as a positive feature, a proof of the authentic spirit of the place, backwardness is found unacceptable. Leared blames Islam for such backward state: in the Koran "lies one great obstacle to national progress" (250). He recommends the government to "abandon its policy of isolation" because the intercourse "with the outer world […] would introduce new ideas" and the "hot zeal of religion could be tempered" (261). Primitivism is linked to exoticism whereas backwardness is linked to the absence of modern commodities. To presume that a country or a culture should stay "primitive" while at the same time becoming modernized in the technological sense is an incongruence shared by many other travel writers, especially Budgett Meakin. Both Murray and Buffa signaled at the "stagnation" and decay of Moroccan civilization. For Leared, the "genius of the Moor" is "languishing" (*Morocco and the Moors* 261), but it could "revive" if the government exerted the reforms counselled by the author. In Meakin's account, we will see

[182] See "El viaje inmóvil." *Diez Estudios Sobre Literatura de Viajes*, 11-16.

how these initially well-meaning pieces of advice would lead into an open calling for Western intervention.

Throughout his book, Leared described the Moroccans at length, although not a single piece of conversation is recorded in it. They are defined through well-known stereotypes: the Moors are ruled by "passiveness" (132). At the same time, they are "capable of great fatigue" and physically "well made", but nevertheless as a rule they are "boastful, faithless as regards promises" (216). But perhaps the worst thing is their "arrogance" derived from "ignorance" (223). They have an "innate aesthetic feeling" that the ancient peoples of the north of Europe never had. The Berbers are always presented as a people with its own ethnicity, they strongly contrast with the Moors because they are "active and possess a great power of endurance," but they are also "a turbulent and aggressive people" (*Morocco and the Moors* 217). The distinction between Berbers and Moors is very similar to the differentiation between primitive and backward. Berbers and Moors alike are "stagnated" and lead a way of life "similar to that of England when the Norman William invaded our shores, and the high roads of the kingdom were mere track-ways" (*Morocco and the Moors* 58). While the Moor is under "the influence of European ideas and customs" (*Morocco and the Moors* 73), the Berber remains untouched by civilization and exotic in his aloofness. The Moors are backward and should undergo a good deal of changes to reach the necessary level of modernization. Yet the Berbers should stay as they are because of their intrinsic value as picturesque objects. Even in contemporary narratives on Morocco, the primitivism of the Berbers is perceived as a positive feature.

De Amicis, Edmondo. *Morocco: Its People and Places*. London: Darf, 1983 [1882]

Edmondo de Amicis (1846-1908) published his *Marocco* in Italy in 1876. His famous *Constantinopoli* appeared two years later and was it almost immediately translated into English. It is striking that translations also had a place in the Orientalist corpus in English. De Amicis added to this corpus his personal style, a mixture of realism and romanticism. Unlike the rest of authors aforementioned, De Amicis does not include a preface in his book. It opens with the usual approach to Tangier by boat: "You are in an unknown country, having no bonds of interest in it, and everything to learn […] within three hours a wonderful transformation has taken place around you" (*Morocco* 10). Initially, his attitude is positive, he has "everything to learn" from the place. He is exited by the possibilities of such an "immense and mysterious continent" which "has moved the imagination since one's childhood" (*Morocco* 10). De Amicis also belongs to the uncontested Orientalist tradition: one knows the Orient before setting foot in it, thanks to the endless references given by former readings. From the very beginning, and just by observing the people, De Amicis is able to perceive aspects of their personality. Again, the seer observes a picture in which the elements are exclusively displayed for his own pleasure and enjoyment. He comprehends such picture and proceeds to analyze it and also to generalize: "The walk, the attitude, the look, all new and strange to me, revealing an order of sentiment and habit quite different from our own, another manner of considering time and life. These people do not seem to be occupied in any way, nor are they thinking of the place they are in, or of what is going on about them. All the faces wear a deep and dreamy expression as if they were dominated by some fixed idea or thinking of far-distant times and places, or dreaming with their eyes open" (11). Even the "funny smells" of the crowd are of interest, and the author proceed to inhale them "with vivid curiosity" (11). In addition, the faces in the crowd are dramatized rather than described, appealing to the

general imaginary associated to the Orient so familiar for the readership. It is striking that the 'characters' are not entire persons, but they are numbered in pieces: "They passed before me faces white, black, yellow, and bronze; heads ornamental with long tresses of hair, and bare skulls […] faces of sultans, savages, necromancers, anchorites, bandits; people oppressed by an immense sadness or a mortal weariness […] like a procession of specters in a cemetery" (*Morocco* 11). Mrs. Murray also noted down the same simile; Tangier "looks like a City of the Dead, a vast cemetery" (*Sixteen Years in Spain, Morocco, and the Canary Islands* 9). The Socco de Fuera attracts the attention of the Italian traveler; it is the place where the international and the native population mingle, the place where the rich and the poor meet, where the tourists are cheated, and it is the point where "the last wave of European civilization is lost in the great dead sea of African barbarism" (*Morocco* 14).

So far, De Amicis has established several binary oppositions: if Africa stands for barbarism, Europe stands for civilization. For the author, Africans are dead; by opposition the Europeans are alive. If the first are poor, the second are rich, and, above all, the European acts as a seer, the African, objectified, is the seen. The natives are deprived of any possible humanity. They do not speak, they do not act, they do not perform anything, but they also resemble each other: all their faces have the same expression. Soulless beings, they are "a procession of specters in a cemetery," their expression is "dreamy" but the dreams seem to be empty as well. All this accentuates the notion of Africa as a continent without history, of Africa and Africans as a collective entity.

Edward Said explains how the Orientals achieved a collective self-consistency during the period of modern Orientalism. Even under a continuous scrutiny, the Arab's feelings are largely ignored as they are "subordinate to the sheer, unadorned, and persistent

fact of being an Arab" (*Orientalism* 230). De Amicis' "Africans" are not entitled to possess the last trace of humanity, reasserting Said's idea: "an Oriental man was first and Oriental and only second a man" (230).

So far, most of the authors had in common the same kind of feeling: Morocco was an interesting Empire in the past but its present decadence was evident. Moreover, the inhabitants of the country are compared in terms of evolution with the historic development of their home soil. Said explains that the ancient civilizations of the Orient were "perceivable through the disorders of present decadence" (233). Accordingly, the Arabs were seen as degraded "remnants of a former greatness" (*Orientalism* 233). This equivalent is made possible thanks to a system of reference: the Orientals are first considered just a group of people living in the present and subject to observation, but under such observation, study, and classification, the group becomes 'the Orientals,' or 'the Muslims,' or 'the Moors.' The initial subjective variety—a certain number of living people from a certain area—is converted into a timeless example that stands for a whole country, a whole civilization, or a whole continent.[183] Whether they are "dead" Africans (De Amicis) or "languishing" Moors (Leared), whether they are an example of "stagnated" civilization (Murray), of "funny" antiquity (Twain), or chosen "indolence" (Buffa), Moroccans are seen as "remnants," relics from ages past without any real possibilities. They are forced into a "coercive framework" in which they are deprived of any real feelings and become objects of learning. For the Westerner traveler, every single instance of behavior corroborates the 'orientality' of the Orientals.

[183] I quote once more Said: the initial variety was "restrained, compressed downwards and backwards to the *radical* terminal of the generality. Every modern, native instance of behaviour became an effusion to be sent back to the original terminal" (*Orientalism* 234).

Joseph Thomson. *Travels in the Atlas and Southern Morocco.* London: George Philip and Son, 1889.

Joseph Thomson (1858-1895) was a professional explorer. He had been funded by the Royal Geographical Society to embark on this and other travels, mainly to the interior of Africa, looking for new commercial routes and trying to defeat the German in the scramble for Africa. According to V. Y. Mudimbe in his classic *The Invention of Africa*, the explorer determined the pace of "mastering, colonizing, and transforming the 'Dark Continent'" (46). During the nineteenth century, his tasks included "compiling information and organizing complex bodies of knowledge" (Mudimbe 47). This was the last of the three travel books he wrote about the continent, but his expedition proved to be a fiasco. His group did not get permission from the Sultan to explore the Atlas Mountains so they had to change their route and travel to the zones open to foreigners.

His narrative is the traditional discourse of an explorer, with plenty of allusions to exposure and display. In general terms, the narrative develops like a manifest contrast between the previous expectations and the subsequent disappointment. In short, the book becomes a companion of disappointment, mainly because the explorer cannot explore the Atlas and nothing on sight is original or Oriental enough for him, perhaps because the rest of the narrative is tainted by the initial disappointment and Morocco has lost any interest. In his preface he explains that he has written "a Personal Narrative of Exploration. It does not claim to be a book on Morocco, and subsequently may appear in many respects to be very deceptive" (*Travels in the Atlas* vii). It would be more appropriate to say that it is an anti-narrative of exploration, due to the fact that the expedition did not reach its initial goal.

The approach to Africa is, as usual, made by boat, and it is infused with sexual overtones: Africa is personified as Thomson's old lover who "receive us in her sheltering arms" (2). He also refers to "Africa, with all its promised joys" (*Travels in the Atlas* 1). At

the same time, he specifies that for him this is a 'foreign' Africa: "we were landed on the shore of Africa—not, however, Africa as I had known it elsewhere, black, barbarous, and breechless, but Africa Orientalised, in which the Negro and the European alike seemed extraneous elements" (*Travels in the Atlas* 4). Magic, mystery, and dream were sensations stirred by the foreign land; since the beginning, Thomson stresses that they are not simple tourists, but they came looking for adventure: "we could not possibly sleep that night in peace unless we had sought out some adventure or seen something thoroughly Moorish to dream about" (4). Oriental Africa, this time personified by Tangier, is a place to seek adventures and a destination that provokes dreams. The tourist life is not enough for the eager Thomson, who looks for the Oriental mystery in the streets, and does not find it: "no black-faced slave […] invited us to follow him to—well, to anywhere. One mustn't ask questions when in the search for adventures" (*Travels in the Atlas* 7).

The language employed by Thomson is a language of exploration. He explains that he wants to discover "the parent sources" to see how the "Moorish race was" and "the secret of the wonderful power of Islam" (11). Thus, Morocco "spreads" before him "potent attractions" (12). The Orient is "displayed" for the explorer with all its connotations attached to the idea; the verb "to penetrate" is overwhelming, attaching sexual overtones to the text, so the most challenging attraction is that Morocco "remains one of the most impenetrable of countries" (*Travels in the Atlas* 12). Nevertheless, as his attempt to "penetrate" the mysterious Atlas was aborted, he has no other option than to employ a kind of rhetoric of exploration in the usual descriptions of the cities, peoples, and landscapes, so the effect sometimes is a bit distorted. In previous sections I had already referred to the-master-of-all-I-survey scene, which this time takes place from the window sill of a hotel room: "Before us a succession of whitewashed houses rose above the tier, reflecting back the rays if the morning sun with blinding power […] In opening that window we had

transported ourselves from Europe to Africa" (15). The description becomes a symbolic display for the reader, invited to lean in the same window. In short, the window becomes a peep-hole to offer the reader some 'local color:' "we peep into a native school […] farther off we hear […] barbaric music […] We are too high to see their gazelle-like eyes, and can only feel in imagination their irresistible glances" (*Travels in the Atlas* 16).

In the next chapter, Thomson records how his party received a letter from the Sultan which banned any kind incursion in the Atlas. From now on, the general tone is embittered. If at first Tangier was full of local color, now it is perceived as an "adulterated city of the shining Orient;" such discovery was "something of a disappointment, and by no means fulfilled the expectations aroused by out first glimpses of it when bathed in all the glory and the glamour of the setting and rising sun" (18). They find disappointing sights wherever they go: the market (21), the Kasbah, where they "look in vain along the monotonous expanse of whitewashed walls for a projected latticed window, such as we had been accustomed to see in the East, and which suggests to the romantic imagination of untraveled travelers all that is meant by the word 'harem'" (*Travels in the Atlas* 22-23). On the one hand, this excerpt shows how the author is totally aware of the conventions of the genre; on the other, it highlights the tendency to self-reference so common in this kind of texts. Three issues derive from this paragraph: the responsible for producing the account and his party are 'traveled travelers,' in opposition to their audience, who are "untraveled travelers"; these "untraveled travelers" require the necessary dose of Orientalism to feed their "romantic imagination" and to confirm what they already know about the Orient. The author and his travel companions are disappointed because they cannot produce the same Orientalism their readers are used to, so in the end they fail as travel writers. The reaction is unmistakable: now that nothing is worth their time and their observation, Thomson is going to produce an account to exploit his boredom and to underline how uninteresting and

insignificant is the Moroccan way of life. I have chosen one of the last chapters, "Life in Marraksh" because travelers enjoyed an extended stay in the red city, trying to "live the life of the Moor" (370), including wandering around disguised in order not to excite the sensibilities of their neighbours. Thomson misses "objects of art" in the edifications (374), and explains how "throughout Morocco there is nothing more disappointing to the traveller than this absence of things beautiful, whether for the adornment of the person or the house" (*Travels in the Atlas* 375). One again, disappointment is caused by the deluded expectations the author previously possessed, in this case, preconceptions of Oriental lavishness and baroque richness: "One naturally expects to find all sorts of beautiful and quaint objects, to see picturesque houses, and even get peeps into the most delightfully fanciful interiors" (375). When the observer does not see what he thinks he should see his natural conclusion is unmistakable: everything has degenerated. The Westerner created his own coercive framework in which everything fits according to his own standards: "In everything we see there is evidenced a frightful degeneracy in genuine workmanship and artistic taste" (376). At the root of all this lies an imperialist commonplace "the notorious misgovernment" is to be blamed for this and for "all the other evils which are ruining the empire" (*Travels in the Atlas* 376-377).

At the same level of the "objects of art" are the women, who become another source of disappointment; a "villainous-looking fellow" who loves the Western degeneracy and bad habits (382) invites them to visit his house and introduce them to his wife and daughter. The house turns into a harem when the girl unveils and the author manages to take a picture of her. The description is really picturesque, I reproduce the last lines: "Her great attraction, however, were her almond-shaped eyes of the most brilliant black. These were wide apart, and had glossy, luxuriant eyelashes. Upon the whole, she could not be termed handsome or pretty, though her figure […] seemed well-made" (383). After seeing

this girl, some old peasants in Tangier and several dancers, Thomson is ready to declare: "the Moorish ladies were not remarkable for their beauty" (383). Once again he is disappointed: "Our expectations if seeing a beautiful face to match were belied on the *haik* being coquettishly drawn aside, and withered features and general ugliness displayed" (*Travels in the Atlas* 374). The women are passive objects displaying their face to be observed by the penetrating eyes and prejudgment of the observer. The women look better covered because they still retain their picturesque essence.

After the visit to the interior of a truly Moroccan household, the travelers pay a visit to the public *hammam*: "In pursuance of our design to 'do' Morocco […] we resolved to have 'a wash and brush up' in the native fashion" (386). This quotidian activity is presented as the biggest adventure ever; the language of discovery becomes a comic tool to display their dislike: "The hammum were sacred to the faithful, and no Christian had ever been known to desecrate the hallowed precincts. That of course was the more reason for going; for what else did we travel but to do and see things that other people had not done and seen" (386). This is a poor consolation: if he cannot discover mountains and routes, he can turn to discover baths instead. Evidently, they leave the bath "disappointed" (389), because they had other expectations. What they saw did not match the "idea of an Oriental bathe, with its couches and luxurious fittings" (389). The dramatization of the situation leads to self-mockery: "we began to picture ourselves as white captives in a Moorish dungeon, and about to be put to the torture, which might consist in being boiled, to judge from the steam which filled the room" (*Travels in the Atlas* 389).

Thomson needed to dramatize his actions and daily activities because the real purpose of his travel had been aborted. He is not presenting a very attractive Morocco to the readership either; if he was not able to explore the mountains, he has been able to

"explore" the society and the cities, using the same terminology, but offering an uninteresting result. Morocco is deceptive, utterly disappointing, and undeserving any kind of exploration. That is why this is an anti-narrative of exploration, because it does not invite, with the characteristic fervor, to further exploration/colonial incursion/tourist invasion. Imagination plays a very important role in this narrative: on the first place, the Orient is imagined before being performed, but later on it is deceptive; secondly, the author's expectations are imagined desires (e.g. women), and thirdly, given the absence of real adventures he uses his imagination to either dramatize or satirize his own deeds. He fails in his role of explorer because he does not compile any useful information and does not add anything valuable to the corpus of knowledge of Morocco.

Pierre Loti. *Au Maroc*. Paris: Caimán-Lévy Éditeurs, 1927 [1890].

Pierre Loti (1850-1923) spent seven weeks in Morocco in 1889, and a book recording his travels appeared a year later. This work would not be published in Britain until 1915. I have chosen to place the French writer on this catalogue according to the original date of publication because Loti was widely read in Britain in its original language and there are references to *Au Maroc* in later travel accounts.[184]

Loti landed on Tangier, then took the route to Fez and Meknes, and finally returned to Tangier. He was part of a diplomatic mission organized by Jules Patenôtre, the new minister of France in Tangier; Patenôtre had invited him to record their expedition and to produce a book that would eventually recreate the wonders of Morocco for the joy of the European public. Therefore, the book is some kind of publicity experiment, and it is quite unique among Loti's bibliography. This is the first travel book he wrote; he had already

[184] See, for example *Moorish Empire* (1899) by Budgett Meakin and *In Morocco* (1920) by Edith Wharton.

visited the Orient, but his previous texts were fictionalized accounts within an exotic framework, whereas *Au Maroc* takes the form of a travelogue.

Pierre Loti embodies the classic Orientalist traveler, the master of disguise, the lover of the exoticism and the expert on the intrigues of the Turkish seraglio. In the preface to his account, he tells his readership he feels half Arab, "moitié arabe" (ii) and apologizes in case he has been too "partial" and for making use of Arabic words without a French equivalent. The inclusion of Moroccan vocabulary conveys not only authenticity to his account, but it also stresses the foreign and exotic quality of the text. The question of the author feeling "half Arab" is edgy, as he does not explain what he means by saying that: one can imagine he feels at ease among Orientals, that he has certain inclinations for Oriental customs and enjoys Oriental way of living. But one can "appear Oriental and yet retain his scholarly detachment" (*Orientalism* 233) as Said made clear. And Loti is going to involve himself in some of the intrinsic generalizations of the Orientalist discourse regardless his initial disposition.

The most substantial difference between Loti's and previous accounts is his interest on the Moroccan landscape, very much enjoyed by Paul Bowles as well. The vision of the road is luminous and colorful, and so are the elements attached to the life on the road, such as the nomad life on the camp, with all its romanticism. The landscape becomes a continuous source of fascination for the author, who approves the absence of railways and modern roads. He also looks for parallelisms between the Moroccan landscape and his natal France, so he admires a prehistoric, primitive Bretagne (*Au Maroc* 43). Alcazarquivir is a Flemish town and the surroundings remind the author of Normandy and the French countryside. I think all these comparisons conceal a double purpose. On the one hand, Loti wanted to emphasize the foreign aspect of the place, but he needed to introduce familiar

elements to help and catch the readership's imagination; on the other, by bringing the foreign and the familiar together, the visitor was exerting some kind of symbolic appropriation of the land, accentuated by the presence of authoritative promontory descriptions.

The contrast between people and landscape is striking; the men accompanying his expedition are savage and primitive (37-44). Among the crowd, in order to see from a vantage point "des hommes et des choses" (105) alike, he disguises himself as an Arab. But he does not describe individuals when they are part of a multitude; the crowd if a primitive uniform mass (*Au Maroc* 67), and it is invariably defined as "grey." When he is outside this grey mass, the individuals are objects of close study. The verdict: the faces are inscrutable; they express nothing else than indifference but nevertheless they do not lack certain beauty. Like any other member of the Orientalist tradition of Morocco, Loti is the active seer who interprets the passive seen, this time under the hood of a disguise that is the pallid refection of a mute interlocutor. The author reflects upon the primitiveness and immobilization of the Moroccan history and peoples. Everything becomes the shadow of an old splendor, of which Fez is the greatest example; a synonym for old age, a relic, an old decrepit beauty. The inhabitants of such a place are its epitome, with their indifferent beauty.

In the last chapter, the author is back in Tangier and disapproves of the residents who live there, the commodities at hand, the security of the streets and "l'existence matérielle très simplifiée, plus confortable, nous sommes forcés de le reconnoître, facile à tous avec un peu d'argent" (356). It is then when he acknowledges the "charm" inherent to the act of immersing in the decadence of the "des ages antérieurs" (356). Decadence turns out to be the amniotic liquid in which the ancient ages are preserved. The book concludes with an invocation to the Kingdom of Morocco, in which Loti advocates for an independent

sultanate whose task would be to maintain the existing status quo: "O Moghreb sombre, reste, bien longtemps encore, muré, impénétrable aux choses nouvelles, tourne bien le dos a l'Europe et immobilise-toi dans les choses passées" (*Au Maroc* 357). Although in Loti's account the Moroccans are also seen as "remnants" from ages past, the author's conclusive approach is unique: unlike his predecessors in the Orientalist chain, who perceived Morocco and its inhabitants as an underdeveloped culture without any real possibilities and no symptoms of progress, Loti hails such a culture praising the same features his precursors deplored. Even though his account was commissioned by the French government, there are no pre-colonialist hints, no praise for the French ambassadors. His is an account of a travel back in time, but also the story of an inner travel of someone who feels "half Arab" and wants the country to preserve its ancient richness. Nevertheless, Loti remains a lone traveler whose contact with the Other is enormously limited when it is not blatantly absent, the inner travel becoming inevitably maimed.

Henry Theophilus Finck. *Spain and Morocco: Studies in Local Color*. New York: Trow Directory/London: Percival and Co., 1891.

Henry Finck (1854-1926) is the second American in this catalogue of authors and also the second one to call himself a "tourist," after the manner of Mark Twain. The book takes the form of a guide, including practical advice: information about the safety of the roads, prices, accommodation—Finck declares himself inheritor of De Amicis and Loti, but the similarities between those texts and Finck's are rare. The opening of the book takes the form of a justification: "Is a tourist justified in writing a book on two vast countries like Spain and Morocco, after a flying visit of barely two months?" The answer is affirmative: "if his aim is merely an attempt to transfer to the pages of a book an impression of some of the most striking samples of local color he came across, then he is actually better qualified

[…] for what is most novel, characteristic, and romantic in a foreign country strikes us most vividly at the beginning, and gradually loses its fascination as daily repetition makes it seem normal" (vi). There were no other options regarding the choice of these countries because in contrast to other parts of Italy and North Africa, they "have not been nearly as much overrun by literary and other tourists […] in Morocco, the only city in which tourist influences are at all perceptible is Tangier" (*Spain and Morocco* ix). Finck partakes of the Orientalist tradition by adding a good dose of "local color" or picturesque. Although his stay in Morocco was not prolonged and he limited his stay to Tangier and Tetuan, his tone is grandiloquent and his attitude generalizing, following Mark Twain—even if he is not included on his list of influences—but without the double-edged irony his predecessor exercised.

The comparisons between Spain and Morocco are inevitable: "the distance which separates Spain from Morocco is insignificant; yet, although Spain is not exactly the most civilized part of Europe, the contrast between the two countries is startling" (77). Thus, Tangier is "from the first moment to the last, a surprise bordering on amazement, that here […] should be a country so dissimilar to it in every detail of life and manners" (*Spain and Morocco* 77). Yet such a surprise is far from being pleasant, and the author does not hesitate to define it as "dreadful," a dream that has turned into nightmare: "the unlucky tourist might fancy that some demon had taken him by the neck while sleep ad dropped him in another planet; a demon, because no benignant spirit would ever drop a man into such a dreadful place, even by way of well-merited punishment (77). He adds that the tourist in search of local color encounters "a good deal of local odor as well" (*Spain and Morocco* 82). The author proves to be unsuccessful in his quest for the picturesque; instead of procuring romantic sights he prefers to mock the surroundings. Notice how the author reacts when he sets foot in the medina: "So, thinking of Livingstone and other heroes who

had preceded me in exploring the Dark Continent, I started up a street to the right" (79). Not even twenty years before, Henry Stanley departed to Africa to look for Doctor Livingstone as a correspondent for the *New York Herald*. The allusion to Livingstone is a commonplace used with ironic intentions.

The idea of Morocco as a decayed civilization is also present on this text; but Finck establishes that the decline started in the times of the Spanish "occupation," perhaps because the author himself had been recently in Spain: "the Moors have sunk from the position occupied by their ancestors in Spain, who at one time were the advance guard of the civilized world, had famous universities, and built masterpieces of architecture at Cordova and Granada which are still the chief boast of Spain" (91). Finck was not able to find a single "trace of that old civilization" in Tangier (*Spain and Morocco* 91).

Finck shares with Arthur Leared the negative attitude towards Islam. Besides, Finck estimates that it is a weapon used by the Arabs to oppress the Berbers: "Islam, and all the religious machinery of subjugation the Arabs brought with them, was a more powerful instrument of conquest then the sword […] The Arab was always at the Berber's heels, Koran in hand, to steal from him everything he won" (199). The author adds that there is a "dual soul" in Morocco, the nomadic and the sedentary (208) to which Berbers and Arabs respectively belong to. Finck's sympathies side with the Berbers, on the grounds that "the Berber is more like a European […] underneath he is a bourgeois" (*Spain and Morocco* 209). But at the same time, the author praises the Berber for the romantic connotations of his nomadic way of living.

Not only Berbers are a source of local color; the author regards highly the native inns (*funduk*): "I wished to see that curious place […] I never had seen a place so awful in its loneliness or so unique a daub of local color" (*Spain and Morocco* 103). The

correspondence between squalor and picturesque is more than evident, a constant characteristic within modern travel narratives.

Finck closes the section devoted to the age of Orientalist confidence. The general characteristics of this period can be summarized as follows: a common disregard for the Oriental interlocutor, who is not yet the colonial subaltern. Secondly, the writers share a tendency to reduce a whole culture under the label "primitive." Thirdly, there is a common discourse based on binary oppositions— 'same' versus 'other,' 'civilization' versus 'primitivism,' 'familiar' versus 'foreign,' 'dead' versus 'alive,' 'active' versus 'stagnated,' 'seer' versus 'seen,' 'picturesque' versus 'hybrid,' and so on and so forth. Fourthly, the language of exploration is widely used, regardless if its connotations are ironic or not, employing metaphors of discovery, promontory descriptions, a whole rhetoric of conquest. Finally, these authors partake of a common imaginary, in which the Bible and the *Arabian Nights* are the primary sources and the rest of the Orientalist corpus is the secondary. Both the Orientalist tradition and the genre of travel writing are self-referential and justify themselves with an assumed objectivity. At the end, such objectivity becomes the repetition of the same commonplaces.

6.2. Orientalist sentimentalism (1891-1912)

The age of Orientalist sentimentalism coincides with the turn of the century. I have only included three authors under this label: Budgett Meakin, S. L. Bensusan and R. B. Cunninghame Graham, although the first author contributed with three publications on different aspects of Morocco. There is a common denominator on these accounts: nostalgia. A nostalgic feeling pervades the texts, in which Morocco is invariable perceived as a lost paradise in the middle of the rush of modernity. Besides, the three authors consider

themselves "experts" and all of them want to differentiate themselves from the previous tradition. Of course this is not a definite break in the Orientalist approach to Morocco. Although most of the stereotypes still survived, most of them were "sentimentalized." The Other, for instance, starts to change his/her status: instead of being a passive being, the Moroccan begins to interact with the authors, but most of the time, their actions, feelings, and comments are "dramatized" by the authors, reinterpreted to create a romantic portrait. According to Mary Louise Pratt, within sentimental travel writing these "authority lies in the authenticity of somebody's felt experience" (*Imperial Eyes* 76), so it is the language of the emotions that assigns value to events. A similar fact happens with culture, which is reinterpreted and valorized according to a western set of values.

Budgett Meakin. Ed. *Introduction to the Arabic of Morocco*. London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner. & Co., 1891.

—. *The Moorish Empire: A Historical Epitome*. London, New York: Swan Sonnenschein & Co., MacMillan, 1899.

—. *Life in Morocco and Glimpses Beyond*. London: Bibliobazaar, 2007 [London: Chatto & Windus 1905].

Budgett Meakin (1866-1906) was the editor of *The Times of Morocco*, an English magazine published in Tangier. His *Introduction to the Arabic of Morocco* was published and London and in Tangier simultaneously. I have included it because it is the first textbook on Moroccan Arabic published in English, although there is a former Spanish-Moroccan vocabulary published by the Father José Lerchundi.[185] This manual marks a change in the British interest in Morocco: the beginning of a scholarly-oriented Orientalism, whose main aim was to attempt to establish Moroccan Orientalism as a subdivision within the field of Oriental studies, in pursuit of those "new comers whom I

[185] *Rudimentos del Árabe Vulgar* (Madrid, 1872) and *Vocabulario Español-Arábigo del Dialecto de Marruecos* (Tánger, 1892).

hope, any may eventually find pleasure in proving the depths of that fascinating language" (iv). In the preface, Meakin points out that he has worked on his own to produce his manual and it has been the product of an oral research: "Each word has been culled from the lips of the people" (*Introduction to the Arabic in Morocco* iii).

Against the general belief, Meakin considers Moroccan Arabic a language, not a dialect, and he recommends the prospective students to practice the language *in situ*, because "far from ridiculing the mistakes of a beginner, the Moors are always pleased to help anyone to learn their language, and take it as a compliment that foreigners should trouble to do so" (9). The author felt he was filling a long need that had been previously neglected, both "of English visitors to, and settlers in, this country, who are desirous of becoming in some measure acquainted with its most important language" (*Introduction to the Arabic in Morocco* 1).

Eight years later appeared *The Moorish Empire: A Historical Epitome*, simultaneously published in London and New York. To his knowledge as a philologist, Meakin added his knowledge as a historian. Meakin questions the authority of native historians, who "however mistaken they may sometimes have been as to dates, or credulous as to exploits, have seldom, if ever, misrepresented the national spirit." Meakin prefers to rely on his intuition, on his subjective eye, because, "a picturesque touch or a glimpse of feeling often contains far more truth than the least assailable statements of unadorned fact, and to the student of mankind their value is unquestionable greater" (xv). According to the author, the ideal historian is the one who is able to confront "the present with the past," someone with an ability to "make the dead live once again in the great scenes in which they played their parts" (xii). Apparently this archaeological enthusiasm was not shared by the scientific community, as Meakin needs to justify his works: "the study if the Moors is of far

more than ethnological or geographical importance […] It is a contribution to universal history" (*The Moorish Empire* xii). To stress his point, the author includes a chart with the dynasties in the history of Morocco, together with the English, French, Andalusian, Algerian, Egyptian and Tunisian ones.

This dual effort—to compile a Moroccan Arabic grammar, together with the massive effort of writing an encyclopedic compendium of the history of Morocco—shows a clear purpose: Meakin was trying to assemble together all the possible knowledge on Morocco, to finally make of Morocco a subject of study. The final section of *The Moorish Empire*, entitled "Moroccan Literature," includes works on Morocco reviewed by the author (Arabic, English, German, Spanish and French texts), that is, travel literature from different periods, "the place of Morocco in Fiction" and also, a section on journalism in Morocco, apart from a list of recommended books. This is an attempt to put together all the different sources of knowledge in order to rearrange and systematize all the available information. Such attempt culminated with the publication of the definite travel book on Morocco, *Life in Morocco and Glimpses Beyond*.

In the last chapter of *The Moorish Empire*, Meakin goes beyond his role of historian and pictures the "fate" of Morocco in the years to come. Basically, Meakin justifies a foreign intervention in Morocco stressing its backward condition: "notwithstanding actual independence, the present state of affairs has induced a condition practically analogous. The fate of the Moorish Empire depends on the fate of Europe as truly as if it were reduced already to a provincial level […] the factors that control its future are to be sought outside this country" (425). He was almost sure that France would take the role of European colonial agent in a near future: "the 'military mission' which the French maintain at the sultan's expense, which follows and supports him where no other Europeans can go, spies

out the land and trains the leaders for a future invasion" (429-439). Being such the case, a French "conquest" would be easy and the loss minimum, although the Berbers could be a problem, somehow deploring at the same time Britain's lack of interest in the area: "But while we, as a nation, are unable to appreciate the French determination to possess Morocco, and contempt ourselves by believing 'it cannot be,' they fail to comprehend our calm indifference" (431-432). Meakin deplores the absence of a European board entitled to repress the disputes over the land: "not till Europe—thinking, feeling, philanthropic, Christian Europe—is aroused to the point of establishing international organizations for the preservation of peace and the arbitrament of disputes, supported by an overwhelming public opinion; not till then can the Moorish Empire, or any other unfortunate country, hope for effectively reform" (*The Moorish Empire* 434). Meakin is dividing the world between "unfortunate" and "European," metropolis and pre/colonized and unquestioning the role of the colonizers in the "preservation" and "reform" of the colonies. Nevertheless, in the last book of his Moroccan trilogy, Meakin describes the situation of the other colonies in the north of Africa and finds them less "authentic" than Morocco due to the foreign influence.

Life in Morocco (1905) is perhaps Meakin's most interesting approach to the country. Not exactly a travel book, not exactly an ethnographic account, not even a guide, the narrative takes its inspiration from Edward William Lane. The author, "inspired by the example of Lane in his description of the "Modern Egyptians," essayed to do as much for the Moors, and during eighteen years he laboured to that end" (*Life in Morocco* 7). Lane was considered a synonym for science and objectivism and his legacy on the Orientalist tradition is overwhelming, as Edward Said has explored. The problems of Lane's approach are summarized by Said as "impersonal Western confidence" and a "tendency to make realities not so much out of the Orient as out of his own observations" (*Orientalism* 176).

By declaring himself a dedicate follower of Lane, Meakin was affiliating himself to an authoritative corpus of knowledge and to the chain of Orientalist transmission. The legitimacy of Orientalism stemmed from the "restorative citation of antecedent authority" (*Orientalism* 176).

Meakin's argued objectivism strongly collides with the sentimental reality of the text. In the preface, the author evokes a romantic Morocco full of pleasures, a delight for the senses: "Which of us has yet forgotten that first day when we set foot in Barbary? Those first impressions, as the gorgeous East with all its countless sounds and colours, forms and odours, burst upon us; mingled pleasures and disgusts, all new, undreamed-of, or our wildest dreams enhanced! Those yelling, struggling crowds of boatmen, porters, donkey-boys; guides, thieves, and busy-bodies; clad in mingled finery and tatters; European, native, nondescript; a weird, incongruous medley—such as is always produced when East meets West—how they did astonish and amuse us!" (*Life in Morocco* 6). Not only the Orient becomes a wild dream, but also the encounter East-West grows to be a "weird medley," chaotic, nondescript, colorful. Besides, the Orient is presented as something to look at, something that causes in the traveler's mind mingled "pleasures and disgusts," countless visual impressions.

These impressions put the traveler in contact with ancient forces: "each fresh visit […] brings back somewhat of the glamour of that maiden plunge, and somewhat of that youthful ardour, as the old associations are renewed. Nothing he has seen elsewhere excels Morocco in point of life and colour […] and nothing remains in the nearer East to rival Morocco" (*Life in Morocco* 6). It is difficult to discern what the author exactly means by "old associations;" it could be referring to the primitive, "maiden plunge" associated to an early stage—"youthful ardour"—of human development. In comparison, Morocco is more

authentic than its Eastern neighbours, as it has managed to remain "virgin" and faithful to its origins. The author goes one stressing the importance and depth of Moroccan culture and society, which should attract the attention of "the scientist, the explorer, the historian, and students of human nature in general" (*Life in Morocco* 7). Meakin emphasizes that Morocco's unique character derives from its long-lasting independence, as the Sultanate had always been free from European domination and the once powerful Ottoman Empire. Thus Morocco, "of all the North African kingdoms, has always maintained its independence, and in spite of changes all round, continues to live its own picturesque life" (17). The picturesque undoubtedly is the most salient feature within Oriental sentimentalism. It is not a surprise that it appears linked to another Orientalist feature; the Moors lead a timeless existence: "Picturesque it certainly is, with its flowing costumes and primitive homes, both of which vary in style from district to district, but all of which seem as though they must have been unchanged for thousands of years" (*Life in Morocco* 17). A way of living can only be considered "picturesque" if it is regarded as something to be observed and wondered at. That is, Morocco exists for the sake of the European traveler who bothers to contemplate its primitivism and timelessness. The method to transfer such principles to the narrative is the use of the timeless "ethnographic" present (Pratt 46). The narrator does not precise where and when he witnessed an event, but he introduces them with the present simple, as things that would happen tomorrow, in the same way they were happening yesterday.

According to his creed, to know a country and be participant of its picturesque spirit, one needs to "dive beneath the surface, to live on the spot in touch with the people, to fathom the real Morocco, and in this it is doubtful whether any foreigners not connected by ties of creed or marriage ever completely succeed" (7). Thus, a tourist must be contented by "mingling with the people as one of themselves whenever this was possible" (*Life in*

Morocco 7). Such a calling for interaction appears incongruous together with the absence of real cultural intercourse through the book. Meakin adopts the old habit of disguise and passes as a Moroccan, so his are not the "impressions" of an insider, but the diagnosis of an infiltrator.

For the author, the peak of Moroccan history was the "Berber Empire of Spain and Morocco" (21), and therefore he agrees with Finck. Its descendants advanced little afterwards, although they "have by no means retrograded […] though they certainly came to a standstill, and have suffered all the evils of four centuries of torpor and stagnation [for] with refinement came weakness" (21). The same could be said of the inhabitants of the Empire, as similar allusions to decay are used against the population: "the people of Morocco consist of fine, open races, capable of anything, but literally rotting in one of the finest countries in the world" (*Life in Morocco* 26). This is one of the most attractive points in Meakin's narrative: the narrator sees potential in the people, unlike in the period of Orientalist confidence, in which the Moors had reached a decadent impasse from which there were no possibilities of escaping. For Meakin, Moroccans resemble children in the sense that they are full of possibilities. The writer blames both the individuals and their government: on the one hand, the people had reached a "backward state" due to their libidinous behavior. In Meakin's opinion, "by the time they arrive at manhood have no energy left to promote her welfare, and sink into and indolent and procrastinating race, capable of little in the way of progress till a radical change takes place in their morals" (*Life in Morocco* 47). In Said's words "the Arab produces himself, endlessly, sexually, and little else" (*Orientalism* 312) having no energy left to stimulate the life of the Kingdom. On the other hand, Meakin blames the local government for the backward situation of the country, for the endemic corruption, for the oppression of the weak and the poor. He explains that "this is a rich, undeveloped land—not exactly an El Dorado though certainly

as full of promise as any so styled has proved to be when reached—favoured physically and geographically, but politically stagnant" (32). Moreover, the author assumes that under a fair colonial rule "the groan of the oppressed will cease" (*Life in Morocco* 243).

The book is divided in three sections: the first part is an ethnographic approach to the life in Morocco, including chapters on story-tellers, slaves, markets, domestic economy, the role of the women, life in a camp, etc. He also incorporates practical information *à la* Baedeker, such as best dates to go, sailing companies from England, and prices. In this section, the most 'feminine' chapters are written by Mrs. Budgett Meakin: "Shopping," Dining Out," and "Social Visits." The second section is a political summary of the diplomatic affairs in Morocco, the deeds of the local government, the justice system and the military resources. The last encloses some interesting comparisons between the Empire of Morocco and the other—colonized—nations in North Africa and a chapter called "Foot-prints of the Moors in Spain."

The method used by Meakin in his account is unfamiliar to the genre. Most of the travel narratives follow the route chosen by the author; in every stop in his way, the traveler deals with different topics. In the case of *Life in Morocco*, the book is not organized around the travel stages, but around different topics. Besides, not only any allusions to any kind of travel are absent, but also there are no references to the places from which the topics are taken.[186] As I have previously pointed out, the tool Meakin uses is the ethnographic present. Thus, in the chapter "City Life" he is referring to every city and yet to no one in particular. It is the life lead by a "primitive civilization […] preserved from Western contamination" (*Life in Morocco* 62). By doing so he was aiming to create a static portrait, a picturesque composite of Morocco. It is a step forward in the author's personal attempt to

[186] There is only an exception: in the chapter "The Market" the author specifies that the market is held on Tangier. See 104-114.

create an encyclopedic compendium of Morocco, a conscious effort to move from the traditional travel narrative to the academic field of studies, an endeavor to compress what has been preciously written into an organized and closed manual.

As it has been previously stated, the sentimental Orientalism gives a more important role to the ethnographic description. Meakin's ambivalent attitude towards the natives is an interesting example of Orientalist pre-colonial dialectic. The author complains about the "average" settlers and tourists, far too "bigoted and narrow-minded to see any good in the native, much less to acknowledge his superiority in certain points" (*Life in Morocco* 30). They are superior in terms of authenticity. "The people of Morocco remain the same, and their more primitive customs are those of far earlier ages" (29), writes Meakin, recovering an old topic within travel narratives in Morocco. Like others before himself, he prefers the "proud", "pleasant," "independent" Berber (30) to the "jolly, good-tempered, simple" Arab who nevertheless in unable to "enjoy life" (60). Berbers exist "as a mine of raw material full of possibilities" (55) and so are children, but the chances of the latter are diminished, as a result of being taught in the Koranic schools where they do not learn anything "useful" (87). Their lives seem doomed since the beginnings, "bright and tractable," they end up "running wild." Without tuition children become vicious and lazy, "worthless", and ultimately grow to be "seared and shattered wrecks […] till death relieves the weary mortal of the burden of [their] life" (*Life in Morocco* 90). Same thing with women, characterized by "astuteness, combined […] with a reasonable share of good looks" (69). A woman is a "purchased item" (72), a "bird encaged" (73) who leads a melancholic existence inside four walls. But she is trained in sensual, "unutterable practices" (73) to content her master. She is also "superstitious" (75), inquisitive "as a Chinese" (78), "loveless" (74), "intriguing" (73). But above everything their true character and possibilities are "dormant" (*Life in Morocco* 74).

In short, the aforementioned "superiority" Meakin mentions is somewhat obscured by the general statements against the "Arab race" or the male adult "Moors" in general. As said by Meakin, they "court" (28) westernization, but in its most vicious aspects: "now Moors sit with Europeans, smoking and drinking, unabashed, at tables in the streets, but not those of the better sort. Thus Morocco is becoming civilized!" (45). Aside those vices, they have "given up to lust" showing an "absolute lack of morals" that perfectly matches with their "Machiavellian" condition (44) and their "lazy tendencies" (43). Along these negative stereotypes other positive adjectives appear: the "average Moor" is "genial and hospitable," although sometimes can be "bigoted and fanatical" (48) and their actions can be defined as "childlike" (*Life in Morocco* 129, 167).

Surely it is easy to find similar classifications in the colonialist and Orientalist discourse. According to V.Y. Mudimbe, this kind of statements was as old as the first European explorer in going to Africa: "The commentaries on the Africans' indolence, their unbridled passions, and their cruelty or mental retardation were already there. They formed part of the series of oppositions and of the levels of classification of humans demanded by the logic of the chain of being and the stages of progress and social development" (*The Invention of Africa* 13). Again, the classification responds to a division of the world in Manichean terms: 'savage' versus 'civilized,' 'childlike' versus 'mature,' 'vicious' versus 'virtuous,' 'idle' versus 'active.'[187]

The equation is easily made by Meakin: if the Moors are depraved, have fallen into indolence and their government is stagnated by corruption, who is there to bring back their old splendor? Who is there to take those endless possibilities waiting to be explored for them? Who is there to teach the children and women something valuable? The answer is

[187] In his chapter on the Tangier's market, the author declares the town is full of "occidental energy" (*Life in Morocco* 104) compared to the rest of Morocco.

evident: the colonizer. In Meakin's words, occupation "beyond a doubt, would be a good thing for Morocco" (238). All the chapters in the second section seem somehow shallow, deprived from any interest for the traveler. Moreover, they act as a justification for the French occupying Morocco, even if they had an "aggressive colonial" policy (237). It is also a way of justifying Britain's lack of imperial interest in the country. For Meakin, the benefits the Moroccan people would achieve under the colonial model were evident. First of all, the population was willing: "It is astonishing how readily the Moors submit to the most radical changes when unostentatiously but forcibly carried out" (242), he explains, while implying Moroccans are submissive. Secondly, the "prosperity" of this ancient people will "revive" under such circumstances (243), and thirdly, the corrupt administrators and local rulers would not trouble the poor nor the rich (*Life in Morocco* 243). From Meakin's point of view, if Britain did not get involved in Moroccan affairs it is because their hands were "too full of similar tasks" (243) and they were not interested in gaining another colony. But anyway, Britain is the best example to follow, so France may "perform a magnificent work for the Moors, as the British have done in Egypt" (*Life in Morocco* 243). In the third and last section, the author produces a whole explanation of the French failures in their other colonies, in order to complete his own colonial lesson. Besides, he explains why Morocco is more interesting for the traveler and the "student of human life" compared to the other nations in the north of Africa. In general terms, he despises Algeria for having lost its picturesque essence—the language is "jargon", the local buildings in the capital are "miserable half-cast fellows" (254), the attire is no longer so characteristic, tile work is "ugly" (255)—He recommends the "student of oriental life" to visit Morocco in the first place, in order to learn how to distinguish "true from false among the still behind-hand Moors" (*Life in Morocco* 256). Unlike Algeria, Tunisia is a good example of "peaceful penetration" where native rights have been "respected" (257). Yet the Tunisians are not as

"oriental" and stylish as Moroccans are. Alternatively, Tripoli resembles Morocco but with a Turkish element that is "out of place" and "incongruous" (263), and accordingly, there is a great "lack of the picturesque in Tripoli streets" (265). In the south, assumedly less touched by Europeans and Turks, more similarities with Morocco would be found (*Life in Morocco* 267).

It seems that Meakin appreciates the site according to its 'virginity,' to its closeness to an ancient model and primitive life styles, colliding somehow with his admiration towards the colonial rule. From Meakin's point of view, the Orient is a big complex, in which some parts have been corrupted, and some others have remained untouched. To understand the Orient, is much better to go to a virgin land like Morocco first, in order to learn to discern the 'impurity' from the Western adulteration. Meakin looked for the same traces of Moroccan civilization in Spain, despising entire cities on his way because the original buildings contained later additions. It is obvious that Meakin's praise for colonialism seems contradictory: a nation must be developed by the colonizer if it wants to avoid stagnation, but at the same time it must maintain its primitive aspect, threatened by westernization. The author might have either considered this fact a collateral effect compared to the bounties of civilization, either the French would learn from the previous mistakes. Meakin's double aim becomes clear towards the end of the book: he wanted not only to popularize Morocco both as a tourist resort and as a field of studies but also to advocate for the cause of colonialism and to point out the errors previously made by the French. Frantz Fanon pointed out in his essay "Racism and Culture" that exoticism is a way to "objectify, to confine, to imprison" a native culture, as it allows no cultural confrontation between the colonizer and the colonized. Exoticism is a set of "characteristics, curiosities, things, never a structure," in stark opposition to a culture qualified by its dynamism,

"growth, and depth" (*Toward the African Revolution* 34-35), represented by Budgett Meakin.

Robert Bontine Cunninghame Graham. *Mogreb-el-Acksa: A Journey in Morocco*. Marlboro, Vermont: The Marlboro Press, 1985 [1898]

A rover and an eccentric, Cunninghame Graham (1852-1936) represents a remarkable example of the British literature of the turn of the century. Half of his life he resided in Argentina where he became a *gaucho* and published numerous biographies and history books. He mastered Spanish and a little Arabic. In its time, *Mogreb-el-Acksa* was praised by such dissimilar intellectuals as George Bernard Shaw and Joseph Conrad.

Cunninghame Graham retakes Thomson's task to explore the Atlas. The end of his travels is Tarundat, the "forbidden city" of the Sous, but he fails to reach it. When he is just a few miles away, the Kaid from Kintafi seized the party and put them under arrest for a fortnight. But, far from exposing his disappointment, the traveler manages to create one of the most vivid travel books, one of the most unorthodox and personal narratives on Morocco. The most astonishing accomplishment of the book is its tendency to avoid generalizations, its inclusion of the Other in equal terms, as a valuable interlocutor and a friend, and its way of avoiding the colonial discourse. In addition, one of the eccentricities in the account is a certain South American element. Cunninghame Graham frequently compares landscape and customs to that of the Argentina, and whenever it is possible, every time he includes an Arabic word he offers as well its etymology in Spanish. The author feels both Morocco and South America share the same exoticism.[188]

[188] See *Moghreb-el-Acksa.* 18, 45, 82.

The book is dedicated to one of the three men who accompanied the author in his travel, Haj Mohammed Es Swani El Bahri; Lutaif, his Syrian Christian interpreter and Mohammed al Hosein, the muleteer, completed the party. He dedicates it to Swani despite he would never read it, but "because we have travelled much together and far" (*Moghreb-el-Acksa* vii), and overall, the author has "tried to write after the fashion that men speak over the fire" (xvi). The preface is a whole declaration of principles: "I have no theory of empires, destiny of the Anglo-Saxon race, spread of the Christian faith, of trade extension, or of hinterlands; no nostrum, by means of which I hope to turn Arabs to Christians, reconcile Allah and Jahve, remove the ancient lack of comprehension between East and West, mix oil and vinegar […] I write of […] lonely rides, desolate camping places, of ruined buildings seen in peculiar lights, of simple folk who pray to Allah seven times a day […] of things which to a traveller, his travels o'er, still conjure up the best part of all travel—its melancholy" (xvi-xvii). The traveler is implying that his recollections are taken directly out of his own experience and as one "cannot moralize away experience" (*Moghreb-el-Acksa* 4), such experience does not belong to a previous system of knowledge nor it is presumed to become part of one. Melancholy is an important feature of Oriental sentimentalism, but in this case, it becomes an effect of the travels, not a feeling stimulated by them. For Cunninghame Graham, both imaginary and fictional travels have the same value, as they make a place "more authentic than the visit of the unsubstantial personages of real life" (17). Imagination is what makes places appealing, what creates around them an aura of adventure,[189] and what inspires the traveler's dreams. Thus the destination of the travel, the "inaccessible" Tarundat, becomes the "city of our dreams" (*Moghreb-el-Acksa* 43), the place is first imagined and then grows to be the goal of the travel.

[189] See *Moghreb-el-Acksa.* 66, 97.

The author is familiar with the Orientalist tradition in Morocco and the conventions of travel writing as well. Instead of mocking the attitudes of the tourists, he will ridicule the figure of the Anglo-Saxon traveler, in order to convince the citizens of Mogador he was an ordinary, "bona-fide" voyager without the least trace of intention of attempting to reach Mogador without the official consent: he went shooting "in the hottest time of day," collected specimens such as "butterflies and useless stones," took photographs "all of which turned out badly"; classified flowers "according to a system of my own," and took lessons in Arabic (62). To finally mislead the Moroccan authorities, he disguised himself as a Sherif from Fez, and unlike the rest of the previous travelers, he did not abandon his cover until the end of his account. He explains that, disguised in Arab clothes, European comforts are unnecessary (73). As a matter of fact, as he moves forward, Cunninghame Graham becomes more "orientalized," improving his Arabic—even reading the classics—, He feels increasingly at ease among the natives, taking a Sheikh as a role model (*Moghreb-el-Acksa* 198). The journey becomes an inner travel as well, in pursuit of a contact with nature the author has also found in La Pampa. And accordingly, he fears the modernization of a country that in such a moment resembled "the Arcadia of our dreams" (139).[190] The author considers the desert and similar wastes as a "frontier territory" (141) in which man feels "the spell" of going back to nature and simple life, and explains: "nothing appeals to civilized and uncivilized alike so much as a fine night" (*Mogreb-el-Acksa* 140) in such a territory. For Cunninghame Graham, the natural man falls under the "spell" of the frontier, but the natural man is not the Arcadian savage John Buffa contemplated, the natural man exists inside everyone. Promontory descriptions are commonly found in this narrative; perhaps the most interesting is the mystic vision of the gates of the desert: "Under the moonlight, the distant plain looked like a vast, steely-blue sea, the deep, read roads all

[190] See also *Moghreb-el-Acksa*, 225.

blotted out […] the omnipresent donkeys and camels of the East hobbled or straying in the background beneath the wall, and the mysterious, silent, white-robed figures wandering about like ghosts, the town appeared to me to look as some Morisco village should have looked in Spain when the Mohammedans possessed the land" (128). Like in previous accounts, al-Andalus is seen as the culmination of Moroccan culture, that has decayed since then.[191] Although Cunninghame Graham acknowledges that they "have fallen into such absolute decay" the people –"brave, fine in type, ardent in faith and sober in habit," patient while "bearing hunger and oppression"— still are "infinitely superior to any race in Europe" (211). The author does not explain the reasons for this superiority, but later in the account, we come across the following conclusion: European civilization, "power, might, dominion, and morality" rests on its military power (258). On the contrary, Moroccan civilization rests on tradition, primitiveness, and religion, all of them positive values, according to the author. At the end of the book, Cunninghame Graham estimates that the "regeneration" of the "Arab race" would be completed if they avoid contact with Europe and he advises: "reject our bibles, guns, powder, and shoddy cottons, our political intrigues, and strive to live after the rules their Prophet left them" (338-339). The writer argues that in case the colonial powers occupy the country, the natives will be transformed into "the semblance of the abject creatures who once were free as swallows […] ghosts of their former selves" (*Moghreb-el-Acksa* 399).

Aside from that, Cunninghame Graham questions the role of the exploration. In the Atlas, "one of the most unknown ranges of mountains (to the Nazarene) in the whole world, there is no solitude, no sense of loneliness" (157) due to the movement of the

[191] Cunningham Graham sees this old splendor still reflected in some of the people, especially "high rank Moors", those who "gave us the Arab horse and the curb bit, and kept alive the remains of Greek philosophy in Cordoba and in Toledo, when all the rest of Europe grovelled in darkness; then by degrees fell into decadence, and sank again into the sands of Africa, to still keep alive the patriarchal system" (275). Ancient majesty is personified by the Kaid of Kintafi, their captor (275-276).

passers by. Since a Westerner considers something "unknown" and subsequently praises it, he is adding an attached value to an empty concept. What is unknown for the foreigner is familiar for the native.[192] Apparently simple, such realization challenges a whole mindset within the narratives of exploration and contradicts most of the travelling accounts so far mentioned. The fact that a Westerner observer acknowledges and includes the presence of the Other in his own account, the fact that he is not metaphorically appropriating the landscape by the mere act of seeing, and above all, the inclusion of a different eye in such an act, makes of Cunninghame Graham a turning point in the Orientalist tradition. The native, instead of being 'the seen,' becomes the 'seer,' the Westerner acknowledging a mutual equality. The "frontier territory" becomes a place in which natural men are equal, a place to enjoy masculine company.

At the end of the book, the author hopes Morocco remains as it is. Reaching Mogador, a shepherd's pipe inspires a poetic recollection: "as he sang, the noise of trains and omnibuses faded away; the smoky towns grew fainter; the rush, the hurry, and the commonness of modern life sank out of sight; and in their place I saw again the valley of the N'fiss, the giant Kasbah with its four truncated towers, the Kaid, his wounded horse, the Persian, and the strange entrancing half-feudal, half-Arcadian life, which […] will remain with me a constant vision […] but ever fresh and unforgettable" (*Moghreb-el-Acksa* 340). Melancholy is the conscious choice against modernization and materialism, melancholy for the simple pleasures the life in the frontier offers: primitiveness, friendship, and nature.

[192] See *Moghreb-el-Acksa.* 157, 195.

Bensusan S.L. *Morocco Painted by A.S. Forrest and Described by S.L. Bensusan*. London: Adam and Charles Black, 1904.

Samuel Levy Bensusan (1872-1957) embodies a new kind of traveler, focused on writing a different kind of account, running away from the conventions and the commodities of the tourist. *Morocco* is a travel narrative but also the account of an inner travel by means of which the author tries to lead a 'natural' existence, enjoying the same pleasures the place offers to its native inhabitants, and supporting some primitive ecological principles. The narrator assumes he is an objective traveler, somebody uninterested in judging and comparing: "This appeal is of set purpose a limited one, made to the few who are content to travel for the sake of the pleasures of the road, free from the comforts that beset them at home, and free also from the popular belief that their city, religion, morals, and social laws are the best in the world" (v). The tone used in these statements is peremptory, denouncing, and melancholic, deploring the modern advances introduced in foreign countries for the sake if the tourists' comfort. He also had bad opinions towards missionaries and "civilizing missions," that, together with the tourist resorts, had helped to destroy the "great histories" of ancient sites such as Jerusalem, Cairo or Algiers: "The qualifications that fit a man to make money and acquire the means for modern travel are often fatal to proper appreciation of the unfamiliar world he proposes to visit. To restore the balance of things, travel agents and other far-seeing folks have contrived to inflict upon most countries within the tourist's reach all the modern conveniences by which he lives and thrives. So soon as civilizing missions and missionaries have pegged out their claims, even the desert is deemed incomplete without a modern hotel or two, fitted with electric light, monstrous tariff, and served by a crowd of debased guides. In the wake of these improvements the tourist follows, finds all the essentials of the life he left at home, and, knowing nothing of the life he came to see, has no regrets" (*Morocco* vi).

Then it is not surprising that someone so militantly against tourist intervention also stands against the visitors in Morocco as well, the same visitors whom after a tour in Tangier become experts on the country and "speak and write with authority for all time of the country and its problems" (vii). Up to this point in the catalogue of travel writings, Twain, Murray, Finck, De Amicis, and even Meakin at a certain point follow this trend. There is a strong critique against tourists and casual visitors, against their inability to see beyond their own eyes and their own culture. After leaving Casablanca on a boat, Bensusan reflects: "Passengers are talking as it might be they had just returned from their first visit to a Zoological Garden. Most of them have seen no more than the dirt and ugliness—their vision noted no other aspect—of the old-world port. The life that has not altered for centuries, the things that make it worth living to all the folk we leave behind, —these are matters in which casual visitors to Morocco have no concern" (*Morocco* 26). This is a call for the end of the racist considerations that made people close-minded and enhanced their feeling of superiority.

In other instances, Bensusan follows his predecessors: he concentrates on the foreign aspect of the country, admiring its "simplicity and primitiveness," but at the same time consciously trying to offer a different picture: he is going to describe Marrakech, an example of a city free from European influence. And the road, that is, the way, like in Thomson and Loti, will be described as well: "With these facts well in mind, it seemed best for me to let the pictures suffice for Tangier, and to choose for the text one road and one city. For if the truth be told there is little more than a single path to all the goals that the undisguised European may reach" (*Morocco* vii).

The melancholic compulsion is visible since the very beginning of the account. The traveler fears a future modernization of the country, now a "primeval forest in the hour

before the dawn" (viii). He stands not only against westernization—like Meakin, for instance—but also accordingly against its agents, the French, responsible of "purging Morocco of "its offences of simplicity and primitiveness" (viii). The notion of Morocco as a forest becomes an extended metaphor when Bensusan criticizes the forthcoming French intervention: "When the sun of France penetrates pacifically to all its hidden places, the forest will wake to a new life. Strange birds of bright plumage, called in Europe *gens d'armes*, will displace the storks upon the battlements of its ancient towns, the *commis voyageur* will appear where wild boar and hyæna now travel in comparative peace, the wild cat (*felis Throgmortonensis*) will arise from all mineralized districts. Arab and Berber will disappear slowly from the Moroccan forest as the lions have done before them, and in the place of their *douars* and *ksor* there shall be a multitude of small towns laid out with mathematical precision, reached by rail, afflicted with modern improvements, and partly filled with Frenchmen who strive to drown in the café their sorrow at being so far away from home" (*Morocco* viii). Thus his story is going to be unique, the last picture of the 'real' Morocco: "Surely a simple tale of Sunset Land was never seen in such splendid guise before, and will not be seen again until, with past redeemed and forgotten, future assured, and civilization modernized, Morocco ceases to be what it is to-day" (*Morocco* ix).

Bensusan is one of those travelers who, prefiguring T. E. Lawrence, exercises the advantages of 'going native:' he dresses like an Arab, prefers a tent to the commodities of a hotel, eats the native products, and speaks Arabic but declares it is "no worth." He keeps a translator, Salam, and tries to reproduce most of the conversations, including a considerable number of words in Moroccan Arabic. Salam is just one of the men in the party: several muleteers and porters were also hired. Although this time the men have names and the exchange of conversation is reproduced on the text, they also subjected to the scrutinizing Western eyes: "Salam's face is a study" (9) exclaims the traveler. But simultaneously the

opposite gaze is also recorded and the Other is perceived as an observer of the Westerner: a shepherd boy is watching his party from a "respectful distance," and Bensusan thinks that, while seeing their eating habits, "they must say to themselves we are just heathens" (*Morocco* 18).

The chapter "Green Tea and Politics" brings forward the intercultural exchange. Bensusan is not simply reporting anecdotes and self-made situations, like Meakin did, but long excerpts from conversations with interlocutors from different origins—the poor kaids in Chapter III, the 'Atlas Moor' in the slave market, Salam, M'barak, another member of the crew—In this chapter, he discusses politics with one of the Sultan's numerous advisors. This means that Bensusan compiles some of the information gathered in his narrative from real informants, not only from books or foreign residents. In this sense, the subaltern has found a place in the travel writing; sometimes it is an anonymous voice, as no names are given, but it is a breaking point anyway. It is a conscious effort as well: "It seemed advisable to get the Moorish point of view […] to record it as nearly as might be" (151). The statesman tells him how was the state of affairs in Morocco by then; why there was a Civil War going on, and how the colonial powers—Britain and France—have found a way to interfere with the Moroccan government. Although the author is against any kind of foreign intervention, he cannot help realizing that if Morocco had not been incorporated to the colonial domains of one of the great powers yet, it has not been thanks to the "own power" of the Moors, as his interlocutor explains, but "in very sober truth, Morocco has been no more than one of the pawns in the diplomatic game these many years past" (150). Somehow, Bensusan justifies his point of view by saying: "We who know and love the country, finding in its patriarchal simplicity so much that contrasts favourably with the hopeless vulgarity of our own civilisation, must recognise in justice the great gulf lying between a country's aspect in the eyes of the traveler and in the mind of the politician"

(150). This "contrast" gives him an excuse to be patronizing, for after all, the statesman is "but a simple man," with "the curious childish simplicity that is found so often among the Moors of high position" (153), although "full of the dignity that would seem to be the birthright of his race" (*Morocco* 139).

The melancholic tone becomes more evident towards the end of the book. Bensusan, afraid of its future vulgarization, mourns a civilization that is already lost for him. He explains: "the truth was forced upon me that Morocco was nearer the brink of dissolution than it had ever been—that instability was the dominant note of social and political life. I recalled my glimpses of the Arabs who live in Algeria and Tunisia, and even Egypt under European rule, and thought of the servility and dependence of the lower classes and the gross, unintelligent lives of the rest. Morocco alone had held out against Europe […] with the change, all the picturesque quality of life would go from the Moghreb" (213). When a great kingdom succumbs, it is great until it falls, and Morocco stands "defiant." For the traveler, Morocco had been functioning as a "reserve" of the ancient times, of the times of the Bible itself, in which you could enjoy the virtues of the primitive and the simple, the "chivalrous" life that will be "swallowed" when the foreign powers rule the country.[193] In Bensusan's opinion, the Moroccan civilization is far from being decadent or stagnated; it would be the "relentless maw of European progress" the responsible for its forthcoming decadence. The "chivalrous life" would become "deliberately degraded, turned literally or morally into hewers of wood and drawers of water—misunderstood, made miserable and discontented" (*Morocco* 214).

[193] I enclose the whole fragment here. "There is something very solemn about the passing of a great kingdom—and Morocco has been renowned throughout Europe. It has preserved for us the essence of the life recorded in the Pentateuch; it has lived in the light of its own faith and enforced respect for its prejudices upon one and all […] Morocco has remained intact, and though her soil teems with evidences of mineral wealth, no man dares disturb it. There is something very fascinating about this defiance of all that the great Powers of the world hold most dear" (*Morocco* 213).

Melancholy also pervades the object of the travel, Marrakech, the red city. Bensusan approaches it with a sense of "solemnity and reverence that is not far removed from awe" (77), but he fears the day in which Marrakech would be reachable by train, "that great modern purge of sensibility" (77). Moreover, he foresees what is going to happen if the French carry on their "pacific penetration" of the country: the place will inevitably become a holiday resort: "flying railway trains loaded with tourists, guide-book in hand and camera at the ready, will pierce the secret places of the land, and men will speak of 'doing' Morocco, as they 'do' other countries in their rush across the world, seeing all the stereotyped sights and appreciating none" (78). Now that the sights are not stereotyped, Bensusan is able to reproduce a picture of the city using the rhetoric of discovery. Thus Marrakech displays its beauty like a woman taking off her clothes: "Marrakesh unfolded its beauties to us slowly and one by one" (79). In other excerpt, "hideous" black slaves and starving freemen and plants alike form a "marvellous picture" (97). A master-of-all-I-survey scene follows these statements, with its subsequent density of meaning and aestheticization, but an alien and astounding element is included, "the great rock of Djebel Geelez suggested infinite possibilities in days to come, when some conqueror armed with modern weapons and a pacific mission should wish to bombard the walls in the sacred cause of civilisation" (*Morocco* 79). The inclusion of such criticism in the corpus of this specific kind of scene might be interpreted in different ways: one the one hand, the author feels melancholy, because after the conqueror's presence, the scene would inevitably change and lose its virginal status. On the other, the author behaves egotistically, as he will not be the only one to enjoy its "infinite possibilities" for a long time.

Besides, Marrakech is seen as the last redoubt of the Dark Continent, where African magic was still at play: "The spell of the city was overmastering. It is certainly the most African city in Morocco to-day, almost the last survivor of the changes that began in the

latter half of the nineteenth century, and have brought the Dark Continent from end to end within the sphere of European influence" (83). Perhaps the most noteworthy element in Bensusan's description of Marrakech is the chapter devoted to the slave market. In previous travelling accounts, any references to the human commerce are absent, except in the cases in which its inclusion added a colorful note of exoticism. In *Life in Morocco* Meakin also adds a chapter on the slavery in Morocco, but Bensusan's is quite longer. The chapter is entirely quoted by Paul Vernon in his *Morocco from a Motor* (1927). The whole piece is highly dramatized and it is very sentimental compared to the rest of the narrative. Although the author is against slavery, he does not criticize it with the same emphasis he uses when he deals with the French intervention. By exerting cultural relativism, he tries to focus on the cultural break slavery implies; what is abominable for 'our' eyes, it is an ancestral custom for 'them.' Thus, the buyers sit "as though the place were the smoking-room of a club," the sellers act "with the apathy born of custom and experience" (124). As a whole, the performance reminds the author of a bullfight: "the gathering of the spectators, the watering of the ground", even the "sense of excitement" (124). Like in Meakin's account, the slaves' sorrow is exceedingly romanticized, and, even in such a grave moment, the author has time for a picture that encompasses both beauty and sadness: "little company of white ospreys passes over the burning market-place with such a wild, free flight, that the contrast between the birds and the human beings forces itself upon me" (*Morocco* 125).

In general terms, and compared to the rest of the aforementioned authors, Bensusan is quite nonconformist in his account; his main contributions to the Orientalist tradition in Morocco is the open critique against colonialism, and the inclusion of the Other as a valuable interlocutor. Nevertheless, Bensusan shares other conventions of the genre: the

recurring references to the *Arabian Nights,*[194] the allusions to the timelessness which rules the character of the population, the emphasis on the primitive aspect of the country, his search for the picturesque and the exotic, and his paternalistic attitude towards the natives. Besides, Bensusan adds a new stereotype often found in later travel books: the fatalism of the Moors. There are at least three references to the deterministic character of Orientals. He refers to it by the first time to justify the pacific behavior of a group of Berbers: "In the fatalism of our neighbours lies our safety. If Allah so wills, never a Nazarene will escape the more painful road to eternal fire; if it is written otherwise, Nazarene torment will be posthumous" (16). In Chapter III, Bensusan declares that Moors are "lessened among the human sufferers by the very real fatalism that accepts evil as it accepts good, without grief and without gladness, but always with philosophic calm" (46). In the same chapter he alludes to the *mektoub* formula so present in the works of Paul Bowles: "'Mektoub,' it is written, and who shall avoid destiny?" (44). Fatalism is linked to the willingness to believe in mysteries, an ability Westerners have long forgotten. Moroccans are connected to a former age that we Europeans have replaced by technology and empiricism: "Perhaps the fear of believing too readily makes us unduly skeptical, and inclined to forget that our philosophy cannot compass one of the many mysteries that lie at our door" (*Morocco* 15).

6.3. Orientalist uncertainty (1910-1932)

By the time Meakin was writing his *Life in Morocco* (1905), the country was increasingly falling in the hands of the foreign powers. France first (1844) and then Spain (1848) tried to occupy Morocco. In both cases, Britain, which possessed important

[194] Djedida at night is a live representation of the *Arabian Nights*: "On nights like these and through streets not greatly different, Harun al Raschid fared abroad in Baghdad and lighted upon the wonderful folk who live for all time in the pages of the *Arabian Nights*. Doubtless I passed some twentieth-century descendants of the fisher-folk, the Calendars, the slaves, and the merchants who move in their wonderful pageantry along the glittering road of the 'Thousand Nights and a Night,'—the type is marvellously unchanging in Al Moghreb" (*Morocco* 33).

economic interests in Morocco, alternatively secured the foreign withdrawal by the Treaty of Tangier (1848) and the Treaty of Madrid (1861). At the same time, local government suffered from a severe financial crisis, due to the military efforts to prevent a foreign intervention and the numerous internal revolts. To compensate its debts, the Sultan Mulay Abdul Aziz increasingly opened the country to foreign trade and investments. By the turn of the century, the country's finances were falling into foreign hands, and so was the territory, the French advancing again from Algeria. In 1904, France, Britain and Russia sealed an agreement: France's preponderance in Morocco was exchanged by Britain's hold of Egypt. On the grounds of maintaining Moroccan independence against Germany, the Act of Algeciras (1906) secured French control over the area, giving them permission to intervene in case of rebellion. The Sultan signed soon, but overpowered by the internal struggles and the European creditors, he was not able to maintain his sovereignty for a long time. On grounds of restoring order, the French occupied Fez in 1911 while Spain occupied positions in the north. They signed the Treaty of Fez in 1912, which maintained the Sultan's religious and secular authority. It also placed all executive power in the hands of the French. The French Protectorate had begun.[195]

The narratives written after the French occupation are highly influenced by this turning point. But the different writers saw different implications in the French rule. As a consequence, a period of Orientalist uncertainty characterized by counter-narratives for and against foreign intervention began. Tourist accounts (Vernon) coexist with reports from colonial agents (MacLeod), and the former sentimentalism leads to a satiric approach (Lewis, Garstin). More important, *The Sheltering Sky,* the first "Moroccan novel" was first

[195] Morocco was the last North African country to be added to the French empire. Albert Hourani summarizes the importance of the Maghrib for the French imperial system: "The Maghrib provided manpower for the army, minerals and other materials for industry; it was the field of vast investment, and the home of more than a million French citizens. Routes by land, sea and air to French possessions in west and central Africa passed by it." *A History of the Arabs Peoples*, 320.

published in 1947.[196] In this period, the discourse is neither unique nor hegemonic, but highly individualized. Nevertheless, the Orientalist substratum still survives, showing a different profile depending on the author. In addition, the genre becomes increasingly self-referential, so the writers often quote the previous travelling accounts.

J. M. MacLeod. "The Achievements of France in Morocco." ***The Geographical Journal*****, 52:2 (Aug., 1918) 84-101.**

MacLeod was the British consul at Fez, and his speech was delivered in the Geographical society six years after the establishment of the French and Spanish protectorates in Morocco. This is a piece of practical information, empirically confirmed by a member of the foreign community in Morocco, whose ultimate aim is to explain the state of affairs in Morocco. I have included it because it offers an attractive counterpoint to the sentimental narratives of the previous section, mainly Bensusan's. Bensusan's fears are confirmed by MacLeod's report, which tries to answer several rhetoric questions: how was Morocco before the French? How is it in the present moment? Should Britain support the French in the process? The consul constantly justifies colonial intervention and to do so he underlines Morocco's former isolation. Whereas Europeans' isolation in Morocco is considered "adventure," the Moors' isolation is perceived as "backwardness." He explains: "The inhabitants of the interior of old Morocco, that is to say Morocco before 1911, when the penetration by France began on a large scale, dwelt in isolation from the rest of the world" (85). The language of the colonial agent is similar to that of the explorer; as in Thomson's account, there is a constant repetition of the verb 'to penetrate.' Such an idea serves to justify France's intervention, being responsible for opening the country. The Europeans who tried to explore the country prior to France's occupation are considered

[196] With the exception of Mabel Collins' novel *Ida, an Adventure in Morocco* (1890). The author did not visit Morocco in order to collect her material.

nothing less than heroes: “The few Europeans, that little bunch of heroes whose real adventures are as enthralling as any work of fiction, who did make such journeys of their own free will, numbered no more than perhaps a score in the hundred years preceding 1912” (85). In short, MacLeod is giving a definition of travel literature, but at the same time, he criticizes their way of describing the country. The author states that Moroccan life, “viewed from a distance it all seemed fair and pleasant enough. Nearer approach, however, presented a strange medley of bewildering ludicrous contrasts and anomalies. Sheer comedy or farce seemed the tone and nature of everything. But a longer stay than a few months never failed to reveal the hideous tragedy underlying the scenes whose outward beauty or humor might previously have impressed the traveler” (“The Achievements of France in Morocco” 86). MacLeod is trying to dismiss the credibility of travel literature; he is also tracing a clear division between travelers and residents, and between temporary residents and long-term residents: what looked beautiful and humorous at the beginning was in fact “a tragedy.” From a metaliterary point of view, he is also implying that travel literature cannot provide a realistic account; if their stories are as valuable as any “work of fiction,” they have to be consider exactly like that, not as a way to approach the realities of the country. By contrast, he is entitled to write, as a representative of the authorities, an official account of the situation of the country.

The “tragedy” and backwardness of Moroccan life and society is associated to the interaction with Europe: “Trade with abroad showed, indeed, some evidence of life, and even of slow and precarious growth; but in every other sphere, social, intellectual, industrial, and artistic, stagnation and decay were no less prevalent than they were in that of government” (86-87). “Stagnation and decay” are officially applied to all the aspects of the country, as in the early travel writings. Another reason to justify intervention is that Arabs, Berbers and Jews belong to the “Caucasian branch of the human race,” so the French were

just bringing back to Morocco the old splendor and "ancient vigour." Thus the intervention it is actually a restoration: "The restoration of Morocco to Europe may therefore be regarded as the first great consequences of European intervention" (88), race being one of the most relevant issues of the colonial discourse. According to Edward Said, since the early nineteenth century, theses of Oriental backwardness and degeneracy were associated with theories about "the biological bases of racial inequality." By the turn of the century, the imperialist debate maintained by pro-imperialist and anti-imperialists alike "carried forward the binary typology of advanced and backward races, cultures and societies" (*Orientalism* 206).

In the rest of his speech, MacLeod proceeds to include a list of the French improvements, giving numbers to prove his conclusions: the anarchy between the tribes against the Sultan (*blad siba*) and the supporters (*blad makhzen*) has been brought under control. MacLeod also underlines that the military officers that fought against the mutiny of Fez (1912) were heroes in the Great War. Besides, the settled population was already used to foreigners, the "predatory tribes" from the *blad siba*, so the question was "foreigner or no foreigner, but that of civilized foreigner or robber foreigner" (91). Of course the intervention was in the best of the interests of the Moroccans, and was not pursued in terms of "slaughter and conquest, but pacification and regeneration" (91). MacLeod also draws a feeble comparison between the British and the French way of administering the colonies. If the French were doing such good work it was due to the fact that the situation of the British colonies had always been much more complicated, not because they were worse administrators.[197]

[197] See "The Achievements of France in Morocco, 93-94.

The author lists many reforms that we will not take into consideration: creation of a modern health system, creation of an economic budget, building of public works, amelioration of the agricultural system, improvement of postal service and telegraph, modernization of schooling…[198] MacLeod concludes by saying that the colonial era is going to be for Morocco "the most happy and prosperous in her history" ("The Achievements of France in Morocco" 101).

Perhaps the most interesting "achievement" from our point of view is the preservation of the patrimony, which has the same importance in the text as any other in the list: "The activities of the Antiquities, Historical and Fine Arts services cover a wide field. They include the discovery and preservation of all buildings, or remains, or monuments, or places of historical, artistic, archaeological or scientific interest, town planning and the supervision of the aesthetic side if the revival of native industries […] More Arabic and of a better quality is taught, spoken, written, and printed than ever before" ("The Achievements of France in Morocco" 100). Frantz Fanon explored the effects of the colonizer in the native culture, and explained that the setting up of the colonial system did not destroy it at once. This culture, "once living and open to the future, becomes closed, fixed in the colonial status, caught in the yoke of oppression" ("Racism and Culture" 34).

Wharton, Edith. *In Morocco*. Charleston, SC: Bibliobazaar, 2002 [1920].

Edith Wharton (1862-1937) is widely known as a novelist, but she is also the author of a good number of travel writings, including descriptions of France, Italy, and Greece. The last of her travel books, *In Morocco*, was published in 1920, the same year in which

[198] Regarding some of the improvements, health, for instance, it is explicitly said that the Europeans were better treated than natives.

the successful *The Age of Innocence* appeared. An experienced traveler and a resident in France the last thirty years of her life, Wharton had a plan in mind when she visited Morocco in 1918 for a month. Wharton aimed to remedy a "deficiency," as Morocco "still lacks a guide-book" (*In Morocco* 8). With this purpose in mind, and aided by the authorities—not in vain the book is dedicated to General Lyautey, resident general, and his wife—Wharton arrived in a moment which was "unique in the history of the country; the brief moment of transition between its virtually complete subjection to European authority" and before "all the banalities and promiscuities of modern travel" (10) were established. It seems that this transitional element is a permanent feature of travel writing. Every traveler is convinced that he or she is going to be the last one in witnessing the wonders of the country they are in. This is accompanied by a subsequent urgency that prepares the reader and maintains his/her attention. There is an enormous contradiction: while Wharton deplores modernization, she is completely favorable to all the innovations France has introduced in the country. Besides, she travels by car, and in a month she has time to explore most of the country, so we can assert that she is one of the first modern tourist, as the previous ones merely spent their time in Tangier and environs. The writer also explains that the country will be soon invaded by the "great torrent of tourism", and that perhaps she has been the last person to observe the old splendor. "No eye will ever again see Moulay Idriss and Fez and Marrakech as I saw them" (10), she mourns. Of course the eye is responsible for capturing of the essence of the country, as we have seen in other texts, mainly in exploration narratives. More important, she is the first in such a "great torrent" and for that reason she needed to produce the guidebook that the country, under the new circumstances, required. Wharton is aware of the previous bibliography, but she is only familiar with the French books. She aims to reproduce the "visual and picturesque side" (11) of Morocco, a forgotten aspect in academic books according to the author, although

most of the books in the Anglo-American tradition do not fail to do so. Morocco is "too curious, too beautiful, too rich in landscapes and architecture, and above all too much of a novelty […] the impression of mystery and remoteness which the country now produces must inevitably vanish with the approach of the 'Circular Ticket'" (*In Morocco* 10). The author is not offering anything new, as foreignness, novelty, and mystery was often associated to Morocco.

Wharton makes uses of well-known stereotypes, emphasizing the romantic quality of the country. For example, there are elements of the *Arabian Nights* placed out of context: "If one loses one's way in Morocco, civilization vanishes as though it were a magic carpet rolled up by a Djinn" (20). Whereas in Sallee, she exclaims: "everything that the reader of the Arabian Nights expects to find is here: the whitewashed niches wherein pale youths sit weaving the fine mattings […] the tunneled passages where indolent merchants with bare feet crouch […] the stalls […] and the varied wares and cakes and condiments that the lady in the tale of the Three Calanders went out to buy, that memorable morning in the market of Bagdad (25). That is, civilization—as understood by Wharton—is replaced by the magic and wonder of the Oriental myths. The journey becomes a mythic journey and as well as a travel back in time: Passing through the fallen gates of the town is like being "completely reabsorbed into the past" (*In Morocco* 27).

Oriental civilization is also fatalistic and tortuous: "This bending of passages […] is like an architectural expression of the tortuous secret soul of the land" (22). In this sentence, the external aspect of the place corroborates Wharton predispositions and previous ideas about the psychology of the Orient. A couple of pages later, the first allusion to a Moroccan appears: a father hugging his child in a ruined cemetery, and also "a solitary philosopher." People are elements in the picturesque construction Wharton is recreating for

the American eyes. She finally reflects: "There is infinite sadness in this scene under the fading sky […] One seems to be not in Africa itself, but in the Africa that northern crusaders may have dreamed of in snow-bound castles" (22). The present situation is linked to the (imaginary) past with the usual emphasis on timelessness which permeates these kinds of texts. These observations play an important role in the place-making. The narrative becomes a composite made of observations, myths, pseudo-history and familiar imagery where the intercultural exchange is absolutely absent. Moreover, the romantic beauty of the place becomes more evident when the masses and the "ugliness" of markets are gone: "Dawn is the romantic hour in Africa. Dirt and dilapidation disappear under a pearly haze, and a breeze from the sea blows away the memory of fetid markets and sordid heaps of humanity" (30). The landscape is dispossessed; it is more than ever a picture placed for the enjoyment of the Westerner observer. And the best device to exercise this rhetoric of dominance, is the inclusion of a master-of-all-I-survey scene describing Fez: "the city presents to view only a long line of ramparts and fortresses, merging into the wide, tawny plain and framed in barren mountains […] not a village breaks the desolation of the landscape" (49). Notice how the city "presents to view." There are also verbs and expressions related to the act of seeing in the following pages: they "look down at Fez" (50), "at first the eye takes in only this impression of a great city over a green abyss" (50); "I look over the upper city […] just below" (*In Morocco* 51). Not only is the scene perceived as a picture to be seen by the foreign traveler—such descriptions are ever-present in travel writing— but it is actually compared to a real picture that includes the observer: "we found ourselves suddenly in the foreground of a picture by Carpaccio or Bellini. Where else had one seen just those rows of white-turbaned majestic figures, squatting in the dust under lofty walls […] transform the story-teller into a rapt young Venetian" (49). And again on page 75, a scene is compared to a painting by Delacroix. Wharton alludes not

only to pictorial but also to written representations that "corroborate" every single aspect of her journey and "show the unchanged character of the Oriental life that Venetians pictured, and Leo Africanus and Windus and Charles Cochelet described" (50). The Orientalist tradition is something as fixed and timeless as the culture it is describing, and it perpetuates itself through the Western discourse. What the other travelers have seen is incorporated to the discourse of the new travelers.

Morocco is a place where the past has survived, but curiously enough, Wharton believes past and dreams are interconnected: "To touch the past with one's hands is realized only in dreams, and in Morocco the dream-feeling envelopes one at every step" (53). Merinid art conveys also an "air if dream-like unreality" (86). How can these artistic manifestations be conceived in "the heart of a savage Saharan camp"? (86), asks the writer to herself. In her opinion, they are connected to "the central riddle of the mysterious North African civilization: the perpetual flux and the immovable stability, the barbarous customs and sensuous refinements, the absence of artistic originality and the gift for regrouping borrowed motives, the patience and exquisite workmanship and the immediate neglect and degradation of the thing once made" (86). These binary oppositions are the inner contradictions of the Orientalist discourse. The inhabitants are unaware and oblivious of such past, "indifferent" to the objects and buildings they possessed in the past.[199] Thus, the country has a history, but its inhabitants are not considered agents or performers in such history. Unlike in Meakin's and Loti's accounts, in which the Moroccans were represented as noble but decayed, for Wharton they are just indifferent and they are seldom referred to as "people"; instead, they author writes about "figures," "creatures," "crowd/s," and even "things." The Other is often described as mysterious and menacing, unknown and hating, yet greedy and lustful (*In Morocco* 76). It is difficult to discern how people can be

[199] See *In Morocco*, 50, 53, 86.

"unknowable" and yet subject to such determinant criticism. It seems that Wharton derives her opinions for the external aspect of places; the bazaars are "dark, fierce, and fanatical" (76). Perhaps it has something to do with the notion she has previously developed: Morocco has a history and it is wonderful in its ruined beauty, but the Moroccans have little to do with it. If people are not performers, places acquire human attributes. People and places become the spontaneous result of an endless and timeless fate: "The performance, like all things Oriental, like the life, the patterns, the stories, seemed to have no beginning and no end; it just went monotonously and indefatigable on till fate snipped its thread by calling us away to dinner" (82).

In general terms, Wharton's account is blatantly unrealistic and highly fictionalized, avoiding ethnographic descriptions and using a considerable amount of fabulous references. In addition to corroborating the confident rhetoric of the first stage of Orientalism in Morocco, it offers a mythic approach, intended to attract the potential tourist. In such an account, the history of the place, the customs, and the reality of the individuals are completely absent. To compensate this, Wharton included a whole chapter at the end of the book devoted to Lyautey, the resident general, and his good deeds. The portrait is full of the paternalistic tones that pervade the Orientalist discourse.[200] The chapter also comprises a list of the works undertaken by the French, in the manner of MacLeod: ports, roads, cultivated land, data on commerce, justice, education and medical aid—this report strongly contrasts with the unrealistic discourse of the rest of the book. It is almost as if Wharton thought Morocco was a fairyland before the French set foot on the country, as if the French were the responsible of giving the nation status as such. Before the colonizer, there was no savagery but myth; after the colonizer, there is civilization.

[200] Wharton reports him saying: "It was easy to do because I loved the people" (*In Morocco* 116).

Crosbie Garstin. *The Coasts of Romance*. London: William Heinemann, 1922.

Crosbie Garstin (d.1930), Cornish writer and intelligence officer, travelled widely throughout his life. I include his book because it is an interesting example of travel narrative in times of Orientalist uncertainty. His travelogue takes the form of the old travelling accounts of the beginning of the nineteenth century but with an original satiric approach, the book comprising comic drawings and interludes unrelated to the descriptions. The "romance" of the title is absolutely ironic; the account is not romanticized at all. The typical comparisons between Morocco and the two main sources of Orientalism are soon revisited: the Bible— "I have heard […] that to cross the Straits […] is to leap from the twentieth century to the Old Testament" (32)—and the *Arabian Nights*: "the grey-bearded dignitary who collects pier-dues might have walked out of the *Arabian Nights*" (32) but they are soon discarded and do not appear in the rest of the text, functioning as a commonplace one must repeat while writing about Morocco. Much more interesting are the references to the international Tangier: "Tangier was made an international town by the treaty of 1912, and Spanish, French, English and Moroccan money are current" (39). Garstin is one of the first authors to focus on the multicultural aspect of the town and on key sites that later would become part of the literary landscape, like el Socco Chico, mentioned by writers as diverse as Pío Baroja or William S. Burroughs: the "main business street of Tangier runs uphill from the Port Gate to the Marxan Gate, passing the Great Mosque, the Socco Chico (Little Market), the Spanish church and the Government buildings. Of these the only thing of interest is the Socco Chico […] The Socco Chico is the centre of commercial Tangier. It is surrounded by cafés, where the local merchants sit and do […] business over *apéritifs*" (39). The villas from the Old Mountain owned by rich

Europeans contrast with the description of the native and picturesque socco, so similar to most of the descriptions of Djemaa el Fna in Marrakech[201]: "At the top of Main Street and a little to the left is the Socco Grande (Big Market), a triangular open space presided over by the tiny sanctuary of the Mart's patron saint, Sidi Mejfi […] Women in white squat behind small heaps of garden produce […] Here is an old scavenger playing the treasure-trove […] A story teller sits cross-legged in a circle of entranced women and children […] a snake-charmer is at work in the centre of another crowd […] Strings of donkeys patter through the market […] on the south side of the market is a native café with a crazy balcony on which customers sit, crowded like hens in a coop" (*The Coast of Romance* 40-41). Apart from these timid allusions to the multiethnic reality of Tangier, the book is full of prejudice and the author takes hold of any possibility to ridicule the Moroccans. These anecdotes, far from comic, appear racist and insulting to the contemporary reader. The most relevant is an episode involving Abdullah, his guide. Apparently, the man had been drinking and arrived late to an appointment with Crosbie. Abdullah's speech is interesting because he mixes up several languages spoken in the Interzone, but nevertheless offers a patronizing picture of this subaltern:

> "'By goodness, Monsieur, dis black son of a camel he wish for to depart back à la ville sans vous, Señor…hic! She say he hired pour dix heures et demi, not par no longer. Abdullah, me, I say, 'No, alto usted, par Allah Akbar! You pare my marstah, you beni djemel!...hic! hic! Niggah […] whip to him caballos. Abdullah, I pull him off his pescante de coche and frappé him head on the wall till him tranquil…hic! Hic! Huic!'"
>
> (*The Coast of Romance* 46).

[201] See Meakin, 119-134, and Bensusan, 115-116.

Paul E. Vernon. *Morocco from a Motor*. London: A&C Black Ltd., 1927.

Paul Vernon (1869-?) was an American tourist who spent a month in Morocco travelling by car from Algeria. The book includes numerous color photographs taken by himself and several long quotations from other sources, mainly Bensusan's *Morocco*. In general terms, this account is the first one in which elements from modern tourism were massively incorporated. He is not deploring the westernization of Morocco nor does he embody the romantic traveler, but the modern tourist, eager to get as many impressions as possible. These impressions function as trophies from his wanderings; his camera is responsible for catching them (5); his Algerian guide is in charge of explaining them (3); he has a contract to share his impressions with a "tourist company" (4); the author interprets and records his impressions aided by his several guide-books (7); he buys "remembrances of travel" (118) and "souvenir vendor's merchandise" (107) to show them back in the U.S.; and he wanted to go to places like Damascus and Baghdad because of their presence in the *Arabian Nights* as well as in the "motion pictures" (180). He finally turned to Morocco because the "hotel life" (*Morocco from a Motor* 107) and the commodities in general were much better there. The account is noticeably consumerist: the author goes from market to market, from shop to shop. Of course the whole book is symptomatic of modern travel and a sample of the modernization of Morocco: to visit "Morocco from a motor" was possible thanks to the main roads and other commodities provided by the French. Like Wharton, he sympathizes with the colonizers, but their presence in the book is not as overwhelming as in the previous account. In Casablanca, a fight between a Jewish merchant and a Muslim customer was an "opportunity for a riot and the flow of blood […] Not now, for law and order rules under the French flag" (91). In short, the French *gendarme* is a symbol of supreme justice, and even the native women feel content: "I am sure that behind that veil there shone a smile of satisfaction […] an appreciation of the protection that the tricolour

waving above her gives" (91). He also underlines that the French put an end to the slave trade in the country, but at the same time Vernon deplores the absence of such a picturesque site as the slave market of Marrakech: "One of the great sights that used to attract visitors previous to 1902 has gone, never again to be returned while the French Protectorate lasts: the Slave Market of Marrakesh. Bensusan in his book of Morocco describes his visit to this market in an interesting chapter, which, by permission of the publishers, is here reprinted" (142). What is the point of copying and then pasting a whole chapter from another book? Either the author wanted to show the barbarism of the previous situation in Morocco, and then the chapter functions as some kind of denounce, or he intended to stress the exoticism of these lands, where they had slaves like in the *Arabian Nights*, and then the chapter is a kind a confirmation.

One might be inclined to think that *Morocco from a Motor* is a narrative on the road, but on the contrary, instead of describing the landscape, Vernon takes Bensusan as a reference and quotes him at length. The author fills the gaps in his itinerary writing about customs, history, and local tales, always deriving such information from different sources. Like in previous accounts, the Western eye is overpowering, with an exception: this time it has turned into the lens of an impersonal camera responsible for capturing picturesque spots: "beautiful bougainvillias hung over the road inviting the camera to snap" (5). In another occasion, the camera is "an intrusion" (*Morocco from a Motor* 100) that nobody seems to notice in the turmoil of the market. His photographs and the souvenirs purchased become trophies once the writer is back to his own country: "There is an interest, at all times, in possessing remembrances of travel," (118) explains the author.[202] Not only places

[202] Vernon also writes about a "picture of desert-life [that] has been much enjoyed by many people, as it has been reproduced in several periodicals of considerable circulation" (*Morocco from a Motor* 161). Of a bathrobe, he says: "This product of Manchester looms and the most vivid of aniline dye became mine […] and the entertainment it has given to many, at lectures and private exhibitions, has amply justified the expenditure of its cost of one dollar" (*Morocco from a Motor* 118-119).

but also people are subject to Vernon's mechanical scrutiny; customers are as interesting as another piece of merchandise. Like in Meakin's account, people pose for the eye/camera of the outsider: "A shoemaker […] rests against the wall; two men stop to examine his wares with a naturalness of posture that makes the real pictures of this native life" (108). And again, in Marrakech, the author finds more enjoyment in observing the audience than watching the performance of a snake charmer. The audience shows a "childish" interest in such performances. In fact, they are so pleased that it seems the performer is charming them rather than the snake: "All around the crowd rapt in fixed interest, gazing at what most of them had often seen before bit still were charmed with, as much as the snakes" (138). Besides, the psychology of the natives is retrieved from their look, like in the case of the Glaoui, the Lord of the Atlas: "a look of patience intermixed with hope for the success of his call was on his face" (*Morocco from a Motor* 126).

As a general rule, in *Morocco from a Motor*, Vernon departs from the genre. The author does not reflect upon civilization and backwardness. He does not imitate the model set by the previous accounts, in which writers tended to follow a scientific approach. What is more, there are several mistakes regarding dates, spelling, and some historical inconsistencies. He does not even deplore the role of the French in the modernization of the country; on the contrary, he is pleased by the change, the kind of change that has turned Casablanca, that "old forgotten Moslem town", into a "large city with twenty thousand fresh immigrants arriving yearly" (164). Alternatively, he notices, as an American, how "barbarism" is the same everywhere: "Some thousands of miles separate them; probably Atlas never heard of Navajo and Navajo never of Atlas, but the conditions they live under being similar, they produce practically the same thing" (*Morocco from a Motor* 111). It seems that he is not really interested in peoples and their culture, but on the products such people generate. The objectification of a culture becomes part of the touristic phenomenon;

the tourist 'captures' some foreign culture purchasing a souvenir rather than interacting with the Other or compiling 'scientific' information of the place he is going to visit. Both souvenirs and photographs become trophies once the tourist is back home, that in turn will be turned into stereotyped vistas that the prospective tourists will take into account.[203]

Wyndham Lewis. *Filibusters in Barbary*. New York: National Travel Club, 1932.

The last of the travelers in this account, Wyndham Lewis (1882-1957), was a well-known poet, painter and novelist. This is the only travel book he wrote, and his paintings from the thirties show the influence of the visit to Morocco, although he chose to illustrate the book with photographs taken by him.

Always extreme in his opinions and sympathies, Lewis embodies the last of the travelers visiting the last unexplored areas of Morocco, the Sous and Río de Oro. The narrative takes the form of a narrative of exploration where the author takes the festive role of the adventurer but avoiding any 'scientific' approach. The language is extremely personal and full of hints to early travelling accounts, ignoring the age of tourism. Already on the foreword, Lewis gives reasons for his departure: he explains that the "sedentary habits" had began to weary him (Lewis x), that the "atmosphere of our dying European society" was to him "profoundly depressing" after the Great War. Moreover, he was attending the call of the desert: "the Kalahari or Gobi would be too little! […] the biggest on Earth is also the nearest" (Lewis x). Since the beginning, Lewis embarks on a travel of discovery, in which one has to be "ready for everything" (Lewis ix). At the same time, the explorer needs to differentiate himself from the mass of Europeans. For this reason, Lewis automatically rejected Paul Bowles's route into the desert, for being too full of tourists: "I

[203] See Marc Augé, "El Viaje Inmóvil" in *Diez Estudios Sobre Literatura de Viajes.*

would enter this enormous waste from the West, at its Atlantic extremity, rather than approach it via Biskra, or the "loop" Beni Abbes-Timimoun-Guardaïa—with all the stupefying squalor of anglo-american tourism about one, poisoning the wells and casting its baedekered blight" (Lewis x-xi). However, this initial plan failed: "to enter the Sahara at its Western end, was, I discovered, impracticable […] No European […] is able to set foot upon these forbidden sands and steppes" (xi). Thomson encountered a similar difficulty when he tried to explore the Middle Atlas: in his case, the authorities forbade him to continue, in Lewis's case, he aborted the initial plan, presumably to avoid possible dangers. Thomson transformed a prospective narrative of exploration into a narrative of deep disappointment, in which he moved from expectation to deception. Lewis manages to conceal his disappointment by using the possibilities that arose from such an impediment. Thus, the impossibility to cross the Sahara from the West is used to convey a great sense of exoticism. Lewis writes about "forbidden sands," "unapproachable" mountains, "unknown desert," "ancient Kingdoms," finally declaring: "it is really the most unknown part of the Globe" (Lewis xi). Nevertheless, the language he uses is the language of exploration: "Rio de Oro is a closed book," he explains, a book that he, as a Westerner, was willing to read but "no European has ever been able so far to penetrate it" (Lewis xi). The writer abandons the plan to enter Rio de Oro, but decides to stay on the margins, in the lands adjacent to this "forbidden" area, upon "the edge of this vast and perilous western desert" where "no European can pass without immediate death or capture, and if the latter, there are, it seems, fantastic ransoms accompanying that" (Lewis xii). He does not present himself as a defeated explorer, but as someone in the borderline between life and death, as a pragmatic adventurer staying in the "frontier territory" to which Cunninghame Graham alluded.

Even though *Filibusters in Barbary* is an account of a travel through Morocco, the narrative starts in London, then moves to Marseille, then to Alicante and finally to Oran.

The narrative goes together with the actual travel. Already in England, Lewis feels unsure: will he ever come back? Many British modernist were expatriates during the post-war years: Lawrence Durrell, D. H. Lawrence, W. H. Auden, Christopher Isherwood—exile becomes a tempting possibility: "England, my England! […] Shall I return; or, like so many of your sons, become from henceforth an exile? I wished frankly to escape forever from this expiring Octopus" (Lewis 15). Although this possibility is not confirmed in the rest of the narrative, this is the first time a writer confesses an open impulse towards exile.

Even more interesting is Lewis's ability to question the genre of travel writing. Waiting for his boat in Marseille, he reflects upon the role of imagination in travel literature. Is it necessary to travel when one can just "imagine things"? The answer is negative: "Why was I going to discover the Grand Style at first-hand, upon the spot, to interrogate or enjoy it in the flesh, or in the dark carapace of famous mountains? Such things can be imagined. All experience teaches us the extreme difficulty of experiencing in the flesh the enjoyments of the mind, when it dreams of what is strange to it" (20). There are two reasons for choosing experience over imagination: at first the writer defines himself as "restless by nature," the he explains that in England he feels so removed from Nature, so far of what is "naked and simple" that he needs to "resume contact with natural things from time to time" (Lewis 20). This time, 'civilization' is decadent, "expiring," according to Lewis' words, whereas 'Barbary' is natural, simple, and promising. The promised land presents itself through the porthole of his cabin, soon before disembarking in Oran: "Next morning the sun rose over the mountains of Africa […] as in one of those foreshortened panoramas, modelled in plaster and roughly painted, used by the *Syndicat d'Initiative* to show you the position of the main touristic plums and showplaces, I could imagine behind the folds of Kabyle cliffs, […] the swamps of Congo, the hinterland of lake Tchad. Sunrise over the tropics was the sunrise I saw, reflected up and embuing with peach-red glare the

mists of Oranie, and the terrestrial plane of the sunrise seen between the crevices of the rocks" (36). Africa is first imagined and then performed. As an artist, he defines the view as a "foreshortened panorama" but he is also aware that it is only a forgery compared to the experiences waiting for him. Besides, this is also a reflection on the role of the tourist enterprises on the recreation of a given reality. Similarly, Lewis is aware of the abundant stereotypes: "In visiting a country for the first time, your head is stuffed with preconceived anticipatory pictures, is that not so? […] The two towns, that of fancy and that of fact, will without your noticing it slowly begin fighting. At once there are certain fundamental things, which, unexpectedly, you discover, one after another" (41). As a matter of fact, the author defines some of the "fundamental things" as "Islamic sensations." Lewis takes this idea from a guidebook of an unmentioned author, and he explains he felt those sensations in Oran for the first time and then they "grew more intense" as he moved inland (51). It seems impossible to discern if he is being ironic or otherwise. The traveler was able to find more Islamic sensations in a "café-chantant" where one can listen to "native music" (52); the bazaar is a "first-class" Islamic sensation as well (66). Djemaa el Fna, a popular sight in Marrakech, also possesses Islamic sensations, but they are "necessarily lessened by the presence of [a] commanding European building" (109). Another place teeming with these sensations was a Berber brothel (Lewis 51). In this example, exoticism goes hand in hand with eroticism, something quite frequent in the Orientalist discourse. Bowles's characters frequently have contact with brothels and prostitutes, especially in *The Sheltering Sky* but also in *Let It Come Down*. This assertion also connects Lewis with the travelers in pursuit of sexual tourism. The more "African" the place is, more Islamic sensations it evokes. As the author goes south, he finds himself in the part of Morocco "that is least affected by the European, in the first place it has come less beneath the influence of the Arab […] There in

the South are to be found the densest *souks*, the greatest *Kasbahs*, and the climate, too, which, approaching more to the tropical" (Lewis 103).

Lewis has some interesting views on the Berbers, whose lifestyle is praised throughout the book. Usually he refers to Berbers when he talks about "the people to whom the country belongs" (38). For Lewis, Berbers are the recipients of some kind of primitive nobility that strongly contrasts with the modern Westerner: "Their archaic nobility sticks out in stark elevation […] above the depressed levellings of our Western life. Our Machine Age civilization has pushed in obscene way into the heart of their country" (Lewis 38). The author deplores the existence of the "bidonvilles," shanty towns in the outskirts of Casablanca where a good deal of the transhumant population had settled, attracted by the opportunities the city offered. Lewis explains that these kind of settlements are not an evolution of the villages in which Berbers used to live, but an "excrescence" of capitalism (Lewis 90-91). Once the Berbers discard their garments, once the Machine Age perverts everything, they will be "just like us" because there is "no inalienable, inherent, 'mysterious' dignity about Berbers […] It is the *time* or 'period' they represent" (38). Lewis is the first writer to assert that Arabs are not mysterious. Their interest lies in their backwardness because they represent the ancient nobility we all shared in the past, all the "grand attitudes and habits impossible to that 'hurried man' of transatlantic pattern" (Lewis 39). Otherwise they are not better or worse than any Western man.[204] Thus, for Lewis, when one steps on Africa is like opening a universal history book, you are "behind, or beyond, *la cité antique*" (39). Lewis thinks that it is a travel back in time, like go to Athens and "find the attic world of Pericles intact." Besides, the farther you go, the "more complete is the illusion of a radical temporal displacement" (39).

[204] Bowles had a similar view: "one is quite aware that in these countries in many respects people are definitely inferior. On the other hand, one's also aware that in other respects they're superior. And then one realizes there really is no comparison possible" (*Conversations* 45-46).

Sometimes, this feeling of displacement goes together with a certain feeling of unreality. It is not the first time a writer attaches a dreamlike quality to the Moroccan reality. In this occasion, this "unreal quality" is not found in the ancient medinas, but in the new town built by the French in Casablanca: "It is semi-skycraping, 'Block'-built, as modern as modern. An impression of kaleidoscopic unreality of the same order as that that disengages from the 'canyons' of Manhattan, assails you as you enter it for the first time" (93). From such city, as for New York "emanate the same unmistakable sensations of violent impermanence […] There is no personality in its hasty places: this densely-peopled city might still be empty, for all the human aura with which is charged" (*Filibusters in Barbary* 93). He also calls Lyautey's policy of preserving local customs, historic landmarks and his decision to maintain the Sultan in the throne "romantic politics" (174). In most cases the presence of military and European tourists annoys him. Only the "filibusters" escape his criticism. Lewis thinks that the figure of the filibuster is a constant in the history of Morocco, from the pirates of the sixteenth century to the colonels and officers of the twentieth. For the author, any foreigner in Morocco is bound to be a filibuster, even himself, a "filibuster of letters." I am inclined to think that this filibuster quality refers to every foreigner in Morocco that goes there to get something: either to find inspiration from a book or material for a movie, to make easy money or to exert some form of power that he cannot carry out at home, sometimes at the expenses of the natives. Filibusters are interested in the wilderness, in the African side of Morocco. There is thin line between being a filibuster and going native; filibusters are dwellers of the frontier territory who posses a better sensitivity to the Islamic sensations.

7. RESUMEN EN ESPAÑOL

Orientalismos: exilio, alteridad y cultura árabe en la obra de Paul Bowles propone un recorrido por la obra del escritor norteamericano centrándose en sus trabajos realizados durante sus viajes por el norte de África y sus casi cincuenta años como expatriado en Marruecos, incluyendo las novelas *El cielo protector* (1949) y *La casa de la araña* (1955), distintos ensayos de viajes, varios poemas, numerosos relatos breves, diferentes traducciones de autores marroquíes y *Points in Time* (1992), una historia lírica de Marruecos.

El objetivo de la tesis es revisar el papel de Paul Bowles dentro de la tradición literaria Orientalista en el Magreb y determinar en qué sentido es continuador de esta tradición o bien rupturista, ofreciendo una alternativa a la tradicional lectura poscolonialista de su obra a la luz del nuevo marco teórico del cosmopolitismo.

La tesis aborda una lectura triple de la obra de Paul Bowles (1910-1999) que, en mi opinión, se corresponde con tres fases literarias que el autor desarrollará en Marruecos y que, a su vez, responden a tres sensibilidades distintas que irán evolucionando con el paso de los años. La primera es una lectura orientalista de sus ensayos de viajes estableciendo una comparativa con la tradición literaria anglo-americana en el Magreb desde finales del siglo XVIII hasta bien entrado el siglo XX. A continuación, rastrearemos elementos de esta tradición hasta su novela *El cielo protector*. La segunda sección propone una lectura desde el punto de vista de la antropología, que se corresponde con una etapa de mayor interés por la cultura popular y las heterodoxas tradiciones y creencias marroquíes. Si bien continúan apareciendo personajes occidentales en su ficción breve, con el paso de los años el autor

comienza a dedicar relatos enteros a personajes nativos. Así, hallamos un creciente interés por entender al Otro, como ilustra la novela *La casa de la araña*, donde Bowles incluye el punto de vista del nativo cediéndole casi todo el protagonismo. Por último, abordaremos la tercera etapa, que se corresponde con la madurez de Bowles, donde una lectura basada en las recientes teorías del cosmopolitismo arrojará una nueva luz sobre sus traducciones de autores marroquíes y sobre su obra más tardía, *Points in Time*, su personalísima visión de la historia de Marruecos.

Bowles entendía el viaje como una necesidad visceral, una manera de huir del ambiente opresivo de Estados Unidos, donde se sentía marginado a causa de su sexualidad y sus inclinaciones políticas. Esta impulso de dejar atrás lo familiar y lo conocido ya está presente en sus primeros experimentos con la literatura, como sus poemas de juventud, pero se mantendrá como una condición irrevocable en su ideario personal durante el resto de su vida. Dicha compulsión es parcialmente compartida con autores más jóvenes que seguirán sus pasos hasta Marruecos, como es el caso de William S. Burroughs o Allen Ginsberg, que compartirán su desprecio por los valores tradicionales americanos aunque, a diferencia de Bowles, y en especial Ginsberg, aspirarán a redefinirlos. El viaje, inicialmente una consecuencia lógica del abandono del suelo patrio, pasa a ser un desafío a la identidad que se irá forjando a través del contacto con otras culturas, un contacto que se convertirá en el tema central de la mayor parte de su obra: el conflicto entre el hombre "civilizado" y el hombre "primitivo". Bowles traslada este conflicto, ya presente en algunos de los autores de viajes orientalistas, a la ficción y lo lleva hasta el extremo para explorar los límites de las relaciones interculturales y sacar a la luz las debilidades de su propia civilización. Si los libros de viaje tradicionales creaban "imperio" y fomentaban el deseo colonial, Bowles explora los límites del cosmopolitismo a través de relatos violentos que exponen la estrechez de miras de sus compatriotas americanos. En lugar de adherirse a

un discurso imperialista, Bowles se mantendrá al margen de esta tendencia explorando su propia subjetividad y nuevas formas de interactuar con la alteridad. No obstante, en algunas ocasiones Bowles adoptará posturas propias del Orientalismo en su etapa sentimental, como la preocupación por la desaparición de las costumbres y la concepción de la cultura marroquí como un espacio donde la magia cobra vida, el fatalismo rige el comportamiento de las personas y el tiempo se ha detenido.

No obstante, el espacio colonial no solo es entendido como espacio humano, sino también como espacio geográfico. Así, Bowles alterará la tradición orientalista sobre el desierto con *El cielo protector*, donde modificará los códigos de apropiación del paisaje, que se convierte en una fuente de terror existencial, una suerte de lado oscuro de lo sublime, donde el sujeto se disuelve, otro de los temas que aparecen recurrentemente en la obra de Bowles.

Las trazas de Orientalismo sentimental irán desapareciendo durante su etapa antropológica, a medida que Bowles va conociendo mejor la cultura y la lengua del Otro y pasa a ser un expatriado permanente. A pesar de alcanzar un conocimiento considerable, Bowles no trata de crear un marco discursivo donde encapsular las tradiciones del Otro como si de un coleccionista de experiencias y creencias se tratara. Más bien está interesado en explorar las posibilidades del mito y la relación entre el subconsciente y ciertas manifestaciones culturales ancestrales, espoleado por las lecturas del etnólogo Lucien Lévy-Bruhl sobre la mentalidad primitiva. Al mismo tiempo, Bowles despliega un interés conservacionista que lo sitúa en la prolija tradición antropológica angloamericana del Magreb con la que comparte los mismos puntos de interés: música, ritos y danzas de las hermandades religiosas, magia y brujería, espíritus, etc. La ficción breve de Bowles funciona a modo de catálogo de usos y costumbres populares marroquíes, aunque el autor

mantiene temas y conflictos recurrentes en su obra, pues los protagonistas de los trabajos de esta etapa también pasan por procesos de crisis y disolución del Yo.

No obstante, la fascinación por la otredad va más allá de una mera celebración del exotismo y la diversidad, ya que en el pensamiento de Bowles encontramos una identificación con el Otro a través de la cultura y en los usos de la imaginación, pues consideraba que compartía con los marroquíes una percepción similar de la creatividad. Sobre todo, sentirá una afinidad especial con otros autores como Larbi Layachi, Mohamed Choukri y Mohammed Mrabet que, como él, son figuras marginales, en su caso debido a sus orígenes humildes o su analfabetismo. A través de la adaptación y traducción de los relatos orales de estos autores al inglés, Bowles preserva una memoria condenada al olvido en unos relatos que desafían el discurso colonial y que suponen una irrupción en el discurso sobre Marruecos. El Bowles cosmopolita aúna sus intereses de viajero y antropólogo y hace de su experiencia vital como expatriado un espacio liminal donde el yo literario fragmentado puede explorar opciones que inicialmente le están vetadas al antropólogo y al viajero.

Así, las traducciones de Bowles, ya sean de relatos orales en árabe dialectal marroquí (*darija*), como en el caso de Layachi y Mrabet, o escritos del árabe clásico entremezclados con español oral, como en el caso de las obras de Choukri, funcionan como un ejemplo de confrontación y colaboración, un ejercicio de hibridismo cultural, capaces de desmontar las estructuras binarias de dominación colonial mediante una postura cosmopolita y crítica. A pesar de mantener una situación privilegiada como expatriado y de alimentar involuntariamente la leyenda de la ciudad como lugar de depravación y excesos, gracias a estos proyectos Bowles fomentará la creación de un espacio híbrido y multilingüe de creación literaria en el Tánger poscolonial, fortaleciendo el mito de la ciudad y atrayendo a nuevos creadores.

Su última obra de relevancia, *Points in Time,* sitúa a Bowles en un espacio cosmopolita extra temporal, donde se embarca en un viaje a través del tiempo para ofrecer una visión de la historia del país que encaja con su propio ideario e intereses. Bowles consigue subvertir por completo la tradición orientalista de Marruecos ofreciendo un relato fragmentario, una fractura en el discurso de los grandes relatos a los que aludiera Jean-François Lyotard. En este último viaje imaginario, el Bowles más cosmopolita se disuelve en la historia del lugar que tan íntimamente llegó a conocer.

Palabras clave: orientalismo, cosmopolitismo, alteridad, expatriación, antropología, literatura de viajes, poscolonialismo, traducción.

8. ENGLISH SUMMARY

Orientalisms: Exile, Alterity and Arabic Culture in the Writings of Paul Bowles is a journey through the works the North American author created while he was traveling through North African and living in Morocco as an expatriate for nearly fifty years. To this purpose, I will study in depth the novels *The Sheltering Sky* (1949) and *The Spider's House* (1955) and I will also focus on different travel essays, several poems, a number of poems, numerous short stories, various translations of fiction and non-fiction works by Moroccan authors and, finally, *Points in Time* (1992), a lyrical history of Morocco.

The goal of this dissertation is to reexamine the role of Paul Bowles within the Orientalist literary tradition of the Maghrib and to establish in what ways he follows this trend or rather departs from it, with the intention of complementing the postcolonial reading of his works with the recent theoretical framework of cosmopolitanism.

The dissertation tackles a threefold approach to the writings of Paul Bowles (1910-1999), that, in my opinion, matches with three literary stages developed by the author in Morocco. In turn, these stages are connected to three different sensitivities that will evolve as time went by. The first approach displays an Orientalist reading of his travel essays, comparing them with the literary tradition in English language set in North Africa since the end of the 18th century to the first decades of the 20th century. Then, I will trace elements belonging to the Orientalist tradition in his writings, including his novel *The Sheltering Sky*. Secondly, I will continue with an anthropological reading that coincides with Bowles's

increasing interest in popular culture and the heterodox Moroccan folklore. Even though Western characters are frequent in his short fiction, he starts to devote full short stories to native characters throughout the years. In this sense, approaching and understanding the Other becomes the primary interest, as illustrated in the novel *The Spider's House*, where Bowles includes for the first time a native main character and tells part of the novel from his point of view. Thirdly, I will explore his last stage, that coincides with Bowles's maturity. I will elaborate a reading based on the recent theories of cosmopolitanism in order to shed a different light on his translations of Moroccan works and to explore his latest work, *Points in Time*, his personal vision of the history of Morocco.

For Bowles, traveling was a compulsion, a driving force that impelled him to leave the coercive atmosphere of the U.S., where he felt alienated due to his sexuality and political leanings. This urge to leave the familiar soon appeared in his first literary experiments, such as his early poems, but he will maintain this irrevocable attitude for the rest of his life. His rejection of American values would be shared afterwards by the Beat writers, mainly Ginsberg and Burroughs, although they, especially the first one, would aspire to redefine them. Traveling, initially a logic consequence of the abandonment of the home soil, becomes a challenge to identity, an identity that would be forged through the contact with Other cultures. The subsequent conflict is the central theme of most of his fiction: the conflict of the civilized man when contacting a primitive society and its "natural" man. Even though this theme was explored by some of the previous travel writers in Morocco, Bowles was the first one to include this conflict in a fiction work and took it to the extreme, exploring the limits of cross-cultural interaction and the feebleness of his own civilization. If traditional travel books triggered the colonial desire and created empire at home, Bowles explored the limits of cosmopolitanism in his violent fiction to expose the parochialism of his American compatriots. Instead of adhering to a colonialist/imperialist

discourse, he maintained himself on the margins, exploring his own subjectivity and exploring ways for the self to interact with alterity. At the same time, he adopted some aspects of the sentimental stage of Orientalism, such as the remarks on the disappearance of the traditional aspects of Moroccan culture, or the impression that Morocco was a place where time had come to a stop, magic ranged free and the local behavior was guided by fatalism.

Colonial space acquires also a geographic dimension. Bowles will alter the Orientalist tradition of the Sahara in *The Sheltering Sky*, subverting the codes of appropriation of the landscape, which becomes a source of horror, the dark side of the sublime in Nature. This maneuver paves the ground for another central theme in Bowles's writings: the dissolution of the self, the self's undoing.

The traces of sentimental Orientalism disappear during his anthropological stage, after Bowles had become a permanent expatriate. He applied himself to study the native culture and language in depth. Despite achieving a considerable knowledge, Bowles was not trying to create a discursive framework to encapsulate the Other within, he was not acting as a collector of experiences and beliefs. He was rather exploring the possibilities of myth and the relation between the unconscious and certain cultural manifestations, inspired by the works of the ethnologist Lucien Lévy-Bruhl. At the same time, he shows a conservationist attitude that aligns him within Anglo-American anthropology, partaking of the same subjects that professional anthropologists researched in Morocco, such as saints, religious brotherhoods, magic, witchcraft, genii or *baraka*. The short fiction of Paul Bowles is a catalogue of ritual and traditional beliefs, but the author maintains the same themes and conflicts, frequently including only native characters, who also undergo processes of identity crisis and dissolution.

However, Bowles's fascination with otherness is not an empty celebration of exoticism and diversity. There is an identification with the Other through culture. The author believed he shared with Moroccans a similar imagination and sense of creativity. He felt an especial affinity with authors such as Larbi Layachi, Mohamed Choukri or Mohammed Mrabet, marginal figures like himself, in their case due to their humble origins or their illiteracy. Through the adaptation and translation of their oral tales, Bowles was preserving a memory that was condemned to oblivion. These tales challenge the colonial discourse and work as a rupture, a discontinuity of the discourse on Morocco. The cosmopolitan Bowles combines the interests of both the traveler and the anthropologist and turns the expatriate experience into a liminal space where the fragmentary self can explore options that were limited to the anthropologist and the traveler.

Bowles's translations, whether they are oral tales told in Moroccan Arabic (*darija*), as in the case of Layachi and Mrabet, or written in classical Arabic mixed with oral Spanish, as is the case of Choukri's works, are an example of confrontation and collaboration, an exercise of cultural hybridization, where he was able to reformulate and renew the colonial past, taking down the binary structures of dominance through an exercise of critical cosmopolitanism. Despite maintaining a privileged position as an expatriate and collaborating in the mythologization as a place of excesses and depravity, with these projects Bowles opened Tangier as a hybrid, multilingual literary space for the national and transnational authors to come.

His last relevant work, *Points in Time*, becomes an exercise of extra-temporal cosmopolitanism. He embarks on a journey across time where all his interests regarding Morocco converge. Bowles subverts the Orientalist travel writing tradition offering a fragmentary account, a fracture of the totalitarian discourse of the grand narratives Jean-

François Lyotard alluded to. In his last imaginary travel, the displaced, cosmopolitan self finds a way to dissolve into the history of the place he had come to know so intimately.

Key words: Orientalism, Cosmopolitanism, otherness, expatriation, anthropology, travel literature, Postcolonialism, translation.

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